

LABOUR PROBLEMS & SOCIAL WELFARE IN INDIA

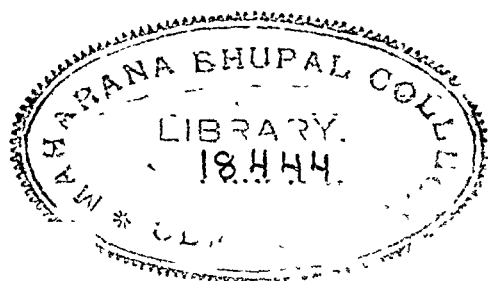
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TO
OUR REVERED PARENTS

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PREFACE

The present work which has been prepared through a heap of material on uptodate lines is an attempt to provide in one volume all that is required for covering the complete course on "Labour Problems and Social Welfare" prescribed for M. A. Economics ; M. Com., and M. A. Sociology students preparing for the Examinations of the Universities in India as well as for those offering Labour Welfare courses at the Profesional Institutes. It is true there exist a number of standard works on the topic such as the voluminous Reports of the Royal Commission of Labour ; Rege Commission Report ; Dr. Mukerjee's Indian Working Class ; Dr. B. Rao's Industrial Worker in India and Dr. Panandikar's Industrial Labour in India and various others but none provided the entirety of course and our youngmen had, therefore, to rummage for the material with great inconvenience to themselves including large expenditure. Even then, much of the syllabus in certain cases remained uncovered. As some of the standard works have gone out of publication, the difficulties seemed to surmount all genuine attempts to preparation. It is, therefore, honestly expected that the present work will stand to serve the end for a fuller realisation of the object under view.

In modern era the problems discussed in the body of the book have assumed frightening importance and a politician, a labour leader, a social reformer, an industrialist and a lay man as such needs an uptodate, comprehensive and reliable compendium for a serious study on problems connected with labour in his surroundings. We feel confident the present work will as much serve the public as the student community for whom it has been primarily written.

We are much thankful to the learned authorities—official and non-official—whose valuable contributions we have freely used in preparing this volume.

The authors feel genuine gratitude to friends and admirers who may offer their valuable suggestions for further improvement in the next edition.

UDAIPUR
15th August, 1958

C. B. MAMORIA
S. L. DOSHI

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CHAPTER I

INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT AND GROWTH OF LABOUR

"India," observed the Indian Industrial Commission, "was famous for the wealth of her rulers and the high artistic skill of her craftsmen, at a time when the West of Europe, was in the birth-pangs of modern industrial system. Even at a later period when the merchant adventurers from the West made their first appearance in India, the industrial development in this country was at any rate not inferior to that of more advanced European nations."¹ The fact that Egyptian mummies of two or three thousand years ago are found embalmed in Indian silk and muslin proves the high artistic skill of the craftsmen in the past. In manufacture India attained the marvellous perfection at a very early period and the Courts of Imperial Rome glittered with gold and silver brocade of Delhi. The muslin of Dacca was famous ages ago throughout the civilized world and was known to Greeks by the name of 'Ganzetica.' Textile fabrics of inimitable fitness, tapestry glittering with gold gems, rich embroideries and brocades, carpets wonderful for the most exquisite harmony of colours, enamels of most brilliant hue, furniture most elaborately carved, swords of various forms and excellent temper were among the objects that prove the perfection of art in India in ancient times. In this connection, M. Martin observes, "The gossamer muslins of Dacca, the beautiful shawls of Kashmir, and the brocaded silks of Delhi adorned the proudest beauties at the Courts of Caesars, when the barbarians of Britain were painted as savages. Embossed and filigree metals, elaborate carvings in ivory, ebony and sandalwood, brilliantly dyed chintzes, uniquely set pearls and precious stones, embroidered velvets and carpets, excellent porcelain and perfect naval architecture were for ages the admiration of the civilized mankind and before London was known in history, India was the richest trading mart on the earth."²

It is remarkable to note that in spite of such a highly developed economy up to 1850, the large-scale industrial establishments and factories were unknown in India. But there were artisans, who were engaged in producing not only arms and leather accoutrements, but rich textile fabrics, wrought metal, jewellery and other articles of luxury, often of exquisite workmanship and high artistic value³ in cottage industries. These cottage industries were either run by

¹ *Indian Industrial Commission Report*, 1918, p. 1.

² Quoted by Dr. P. N Banerjee in *An Introduction to Indian Economics*, 1940.

³ *Indian Industrial Commission Report*, pp 2-3.

individual artisans or there were *karkhanas* in which a number of artisans were brought together to whom raw materials were supplied and worked for a wage for the person who ran these *karkhanas*. There was no mechanisation and traditional methods of production were used. The total output of each artisan or each *karkhana* was small and the artisan had a precarious living. He suffered great changes of fortune on account of breakdown of law and order; serious exploitation by the middlemen, and the excessive levy made on him by the Government. In the early Mughal period there was a flourishing trade in Indian handicrafts but later on this trade was very much dislocated and the Indian handicrafts suffered a decline. This decline, which began as early as the end of the 18th century, became very marked about the middle of the 19th century due to (i) the disappearance of the Native Courts; (ii) the establishment of an alien rule; (iii) the severe competition with machine-made goods; (iv) the selfish policy of the East India Company and the British Parliament; and lastly, the *Laissez-faire* policy of the Indian Government.¹ With the decline of handicrafts, the craftsmen fell back on the land.

At this time the cultivators in the villages often cultivated their lands with their own and hired labour. Part of this labour was supplied by a class of people who were more or less attached to the landlord and worked in exchange for free land for cultivation. Others were temporarily hired. There was demand for industrial labour in the villages then.

The beginning of the modern industrial enterprise was made towards the end of the 18th century when some ex-employees of the E. I. Co., started Indigo plantations and later on coffee, tea and rubber plantations. But real beginnings were made in the fifties of the last century. During the first five years of that decade railways reached out from Calcutta, Bombay and Madras. The first cotton mill was started in Bombay in 1854; the first jute mill was established near Calcutta in 1854 and coal was first mined in Raniganj in 1854. The factory system was a new development and it paved the way for Industrial Revolution. People accustomed to agriculture, menial service or handicraft, find the discipline of a factory particularly irksome and only when very hard pressed will they give themselves up to it.² In the early stages of its development, industry was faced with scarcity of labour owing to lack of communications and the ignorance of the workers. The increasing pressure on land led the people, attached to the land, to migrate in search of other jobs in the cities. The rapid growth of population, the development of communications and some improvement in conditions of work in factories led to the growth of labour force in response to the growing

¹ For fuller details refer to C. B. Mamoria's, *Agricultural Problems of India*, 1937, Chapter on 'Rural and Cottage Industries.'

² D. H. Buchanan, *Development of Capitalistic Enterprise in India*, 1933, p. 294.

needs of the industry. So that, when the number of cotton textile mills increased from 58 in 1879-80 to 264 in 1913-14, the number of those employed in them increased from 39,537 to 260,847 during the same period. The number of jute mills increased from 22 to 64 and the number employed from 27,494 to 216,288 and the output of coal increased from 1,294,221 tons to 15,738,153 tons and the number employed increased from 22,745 to 151,367 during the same period. In addition to these three industries, other industries such as woollen mills, paper mills, petroleum and manganese industries also came into existence during this period. Tata Iron Works were also established during this time.

The following table indicates the trend in industrial development and the number of persons employed¹ :—

Years	COTTON TEXTILE		JUTE TEXTILE	
	No. of mills	Workers	No. of mills	Workers
1879-80	58	39,537	22	27,494
1889-90	114	99,224	27	62,789
1900-01	194	156,355	36	114,745
1913-14	264	260,847	64	216,288

Coal	{	1885		1914
		No. of Persons Employed		
		Output (tons)		
		22,745	151,367	
		1,294,221	15,738,153	

The number of factories and persons employed increased from 656 and 317,000 respectively in 1892 to 1,533 and 524,000 in 1902. Similar development also took place in mines and railways. By the end of the 19th century the altered circumstances brought about a change in the attitude of the workers, who refused to work under intolerable conditions, leading to strike as a weapon to secure improved conditions of work from the employers. The mill-owners paid low wages, made the labourers work for long hours and employed women and children on hard work at low wages. The same kind of exploitation had taken place in Britain and other countries in the early period of industrialization but in India this was noticed at the very start partly because of the competition which the English producers feared from Indian industry and therefore, raised a hue and cry about the backward conditions of factory labour in India. This resulted in the passing of the first Indian Factory Act, in 1891 which was later amended in 1911.

Indian industry received tremendous fillip from war demand, when imports from foreign countries fell off. But in spite of the fact that a considerable progress was recorded in industrial production

¹ D. R. Gadgil, *Industrial Evolution of India*, 1946, pp. 76-79; and 107; 110-11.

and the number of factories increased from 2,936 in 1914 to 3,436 in 1918 and the number of workers employed in these factories increased from 9½ lakhs to 11 lakhs,¹ the industrial development of the country remained lop-sided and defective. "Except for the iron and steel industry there was in this period, hardly any organised industry manufacturing producers' goods and industrial development was largely confined to the production of consumers' goods like cotton and jute manufactures, sugar, etc., or for processing agricultural materials like jute and cotton, *e.g.*, gins and presses, rice mills, oil presses, and mining and quarry works"

The years immediately after the First World War were prosperous for the new labour movement in India. The industries had been generally doing well and the manufacturers were anxious not to lose many working days during the boom-period. The wage-level had also lagged behind the general prices and there was a large margin left for increment. This period was one of generally short and on the whole successful strikes. The success of the strikes helped the growth of the labour movement which spread rapidly all over India. The Workmen's Compensation Act, 1923; the Indian Trade Unions Act, 1926, the Indian Trade Disputes Act, 1929, the Indian Factories Act, 1934 and the Bombay Industrial Disputes Act, 1938 were passed during 1918-1939 period. During this period the number of factories increased from 3,436 and the number of workers employed from 1,122,922 in 1918 to 10,466 factories and 1,751,137 workers in 1939.

When the War broke out (1939-45), the Indian industry, in spite of shortages of raw materials, technical skill and capital and transport, made good progress. The output of finished steel, cement, coal, sulphuric acid, cotton piecegoods and yarn, jute manufactures, paper and paper board, sugar and matches increased. The total number of factories increased from 10,466 and the number of workers employed increased from 1,751,137 to 14,576 factories and 2,274,689 workers in 1947. During the War period, the labourers gave full co-operation to the employers and the Rule 81-A of the Defence of India Rules prevented industrial disputes. It was only at the end of the War, when the labourers clamoured for a rise in wages and an improvement in their condition that industrial peace was disturbed. It has been estimated that due to the payment of higher wages, dearness allowances and bonus, etc., the earnings of industrial labour in India have increased 3½-4½ times of those in the pre-war period and the conditions of work of labour are bit better than what they were before. During post-Independence period the labourers became more organised. A number of Acts were passed during the period—the Industrial Disputes Act, 1947;

¹ A. C. Clow, *Indian Factory Law Administration Bulletin*, No 8, p. 42.

² N. S. S. Shastri, *A Statistical Study of India's Industrial Development 1947*, p. 9.

the Indian Factories Act, 1948; the Employees' State Insurance Act, 1948 and the Minimum Wages Act, 1948.

Industrial Labour

With this industrial background, let us pursue the growth of labour in different occupations in the country. The total number of persons dependent on industries was 34.29 millions in 1901; 34.24 millions in 1911; 33.16 millions in 1921; 32.90 millions in 1931 and 37.7 millions in 1951. It is obvious from these figures that the population dependent upon industry diminished by 1.5% in 1911 as compared with 1901 and by a further 3.2% in 1921 as compared with 1911. In 1913, there was a further fall of 3.8%. The 1951 census, however, shows a rise in the numbers dependent on industries. As the basis of classification is frequently altered, it is difficult to generalise as to the factors determining the growth in numbers. The following table shows the employment figures of the population¹:—

	1911	1921	1931	1941	% Variation	
					1911-31	1931-41
1. Population (millions)	315	319	353	389	12.06	10.2
2. Working population (millions)	149	146	154	170	3.3	10.4
3. Persons employed in Industries (millions)	17.5	16.7	15.3	16.3	12.5	6.5
4. Percentage of workers in Industry to working Pop.	11.7	11.0	10.0	9.6	12.7	—4
5. Percentage of industrial workers to total pop.	5.5	4.9	4.3	4.2	21.8	—2.3

There has been a decrease of industrial workers by more than 2 million as a result of the continued decline of the traditional handicraft industries, and the population thus displaced was not absorbed in large-scale factory work. While during 1931-41, the population increased by 10.2%, the number of persons engaged in industries increased only by 6.5%. The working population increased by 16 millions during this period, but the percentage increase in the number of persons employed in industries has been very small.

The trends of employment since 1901 help us to an extent in understanding the development of employment during the last 50 years. The variations in the proportion of workers and

¹ R. K. Mukerjee, *Food Planning for 400 Millions*, 1938, p. 204 and Kate Mitchell, *Industrialisation of the Western Pacific*, p. 277

non-working dependents to the total population since 1901 are indicated below :—

Year	Workers in millions	%	Non-working dependents in millions	%
1901	103.6	50.1	103.3	49.9
1911	125.5	49.6	127.8	50.4
1921	122.7	48.6	129.5	51.4
1941	129.7	47.0	146.5	53.0
1951	143.3	39.9	214.3	60.1

The fall in proportion of workers is marked between 1931 and 1951, and there has been a steady increase in the number of non-earning dependents.

Factories

We shall now briefly describe the nature and extent of employment in the various industries. The most important single group of industries is the factory industries group. The following table shows the growth of organised factories and the number employed in them :¹

Year	No. of Factories	Average daily No. of Operatives
1892	656	3,16,816
1894	815	3,49,810
1912	2,710	8,69,643
1914	2,936	9,50,973
1918	3,436	11,22,922
1923	5,985	14,09,173
1933	8,452	14,03,212
1939	10,466	17,51,137
1944	14,071	25,22,753
1945	14,761	26,47,949
1946	14,205	23,14,587
1947	14,576	22,74,689
1948	15,906	23,60,201
1949	19,829	24,33,966
1950	27,754	25,04,399
1951	30,834	25,36,970
1952		25,67,453
1953		25,28,026
1954		25,89,757
1955	26,308	26,90,403

¹ Labour Investigation Committee, *Main Report*, p 12 and *Eastern Economist's Records and Statistics*, Vol. 7, No 1 (1955), p 44.

It may be pointed out that these figures are not strictly comparable, as the definition of factory was changed from time to time under different Factories Acts, and also because existing factories may have employed large numbers.

Factory industry group may be divided into two sub-groups, *viz.*, (i) regulated factories and (ii) unregulated factories. The above figures relate to regulated factories registered under the Factories Act concerned.

But figures for unregulated factories are not readily available but it has been estimated by the Labour Investigation Committee that in certain unregulated factory industries—like mica manufacture, shellac, bidi making, glass bangle making, carpet weaving, wool cleaning, indigenous tanneries, coir matting, hand loom weaving, etc.,—the number employed is very considerable. These industries fall under as 'unregulated factories' because they are not subject to any legal regulation. Thus, these industries fall outside the scope of the Factories Act, 1934, either because they may employ less than 20 workers or because even if covered by section 5 employ less than 10 workers. In the unregulated factories group we have most of the so-called 'Cottage' industries in which labour may or may not be used.

The Report of the All-India Khadi and Village Industries Board throws interesting light on employment trends in individual industries. In cotton textile industry, the absolute figures of employment have fallen from over 33 lakhs in 1911 to 27 lakhs in 1951. This decline is largely due to the establishment of mills of cotton ginning, cleaning and pressing, and of cotton spinning, sizing and weaving. The organised sector in nearly all industries has gained in employment at the cost of unorganised sector as will be clear from the following table (p. 8) abridged and reproduced from the above table¹ : —

In brief, the number of those employed in the organised sector of industries has been achieved at the cost of those employed in unorganised sector, *i.e.*, small scale and cottage industries.

The total employment in unregulated industries was estimated by the Labour Investigation Committee to be 1,000,000. But later figures put it at roughly 22 millions.²

Factories may also be divided into two types ;

(i) Perennial factories

(ii) Seasonal factories

¹ *Planning for Full Employment*, pp 132-134

² *Indian Year Book*, 1956-57.

Industry	Organised		Unorganised	
	1901	1951	1901	1951
1. Cotton ginning, cleaning and pressing.	40,000	100,000	96,000	51,000
2. Cotton Spinning, sizing and weaving.	180,000	780,000	284,000 (1911)	167,000
3. Silk industry ..	10,000 (1911)	22,000	151,000 (1911)	32,000
4. Wood industry	3,250 (1911)	22,000	153,000 (1911)	57,000
5. Rice pounding, etc.	5,000	7,000	974,000 (1911)	136,000
6. Sugar industry	27,900	100,500	75,300	70,521
7. Oil pressing ...	4,800	42,200	465,400	184,500
8. Leather products	9,000	31,000	1,100,000	6,80,000
9. Glass beads, Bangles, etc.	...	...	60,000	39,900

(i) In perennial factories, the textile mills employ the largest group of workers. In this group, the cotton spinning and weaving mills account for about 60% of the total employment in textile industries. Labour in this group is easily the best organised part of India's industrial population, and this is obviously due to employment in these factories being more stable and permanent.

Engineering (iron and steel, ordnance, ship building, railways) minerals and metals form the second largest group.

The third group of perennial factories, comprises food, drink and tobacco factories, chemicals and dyes, paper mills, printing presses, wood, stone and glass works and leather works.

The table on p. 9 gives an analysis of workers employed in factories of different types¹

(ii) Seasonal factories are those which, on an average work for not more than 180 days in a year. Such factories are comparatively small, are distributed over wide areas, and recruit labour from amongst agriculturists. In such factories there is a large proportion of women than in perennial factories. These factories comprise two groups :—

(a) One consisting of cotton ginning and pressing, jute pressing indigo, shellac, tea, coffee and rubber factories. This group is predominantly seasonal.

¹ *Labour Year Book*, for 1946; 1948-49; 1949-50, 1950-51 and *Indian Labour Gazette*, March, 1957, pp 7427-43.

Industry	No. of Workers Employed				
	1939	1945	1947	1949	1955
		(In '000)			
Textiles ...	819	1,014	1,008	1047	1,060
Engineering ...	160	315	381	370	386
Minerals and metals	55	125	101	109	259
Food, drink and Tobacco	248	310	319	348	444
Chemicals and dyes	58	101	95	120	109
Paper and Printing	57	72	78	85	102
Wood, Stones and glass	53	107	94	105	...
Skins and Hides ...	13	36	29	29	25
Gins and Presses ..	163	129	83	74	63
Ordnance Factories	31	186	78	84	...
Miscellaneous ...	94	247	53	62	...

(b) The other consisting of some rice mills, oil mills, sugar mills, tobacco factories, flour mills and others like tile and brick factories, ice and aerated water factories; such factories are partially seasonal.

The following table provides the employment figures in seasonal industries¹ :—

Employment in Seasonal Factories

A. Predominantly Seasonal

	1929	1939	1943
	(In thousands)		
Cotton gins and presses	136.6	123.8	117.3
Tea Factories	63.0	67.3	72.9
Jute presses	37.3	13.0	8.4
Others (indigo, lac, coffee rubber, etc.)	11.3	6.4	5.9
Total	248.3	210.6	204.6

B. Partially Seasonal

Rice Mills	36.5	2.0	2.3
Oil Mills	10.2	---	---
Sugar Mills	14.7	74.8	88.3
Tobacco	9.9	0.13	0.5
Others (flour mills, tile and brick factories, etc.)	21.7	1.8	2.1
Total	93.1	73.9	93.4

¹ Report of Royal Commission on Agriculture, 1931, p. 75, Labour Investigation Committee Report, 1945, p. 17.

Plantations

Next to factories group come the plantations comprising mostly tea, coffee and rubber estates. With the rapid expansion in the area under plantation due largely to an increase in the home consumption of plantation foodstuffs and raw materials, and an expanding international market for Indian plantation wares, tea, coffee and rubber, the number of workers has increased steadily in recent years. In 1911, there were 7·4 lakh plantation workers and 1 million in 1921. In 1931, according to the estimates of the Labour Commission, the number stood at 1·9 million including planters, managers, etc. In 1941, the number was estimated at 2·3 million and in 1951, it was 1 million. The changes in proportion to plantation workers are indicated in the table given below:—

	1911	1921	1931	1941	1951
1. Total No. of effective plantation workers	741,000	1,000,000	1,900,000	2,300,000	10,600,000
2. Percentage of total workers in primary industries.	0·8	1·6	1·7	2·0	1·29
3. Percentage of the total working population in India	0·5	1·0	1·1	1·3	0·6
4. Percentage of the total Indian population	0·2	0·4	0·5	0·6	0·3

Labour power engaged in plantations represents only the principal earners and working dependents. If non-working dependents were also to be included, not less than 5 million souls would constitute the population dependent upon the plantation industry.

The following tables give the individual employment figures for Tea, Coffee and Rubber plantations in India :—

Workers in Tea Plantations

Year	No. of workers
1924	811,540
1929	930,472
1932	859,713
1935	899,039
1939	925,237
1942	926,461
1944	1,003,840
1949	985,616
1951	12,12,351
1952	12,28,335

¹ Labour Investigation Committee, Main Report, pp. 19-20 and later figures from Indian Labour Gazette.

Workers in Coffee Plantations

Year	No. of workers
1903	82,000
1923-24	74,088
1928-29	94,865
1931-32	96,706
1935-36	102,903
1939	98,570
1943	115,378
1944	110,760
1949	177,297
1951	151,177
1952	164,604

Workers on Rubber Plantations

Year	No. of workers
1926	48,383
1928	58,292
1933	14,128
1935	37,695
1939	32,947
1942	46,887
1943	50,400
1949	48,051
1951	43,185
1952	39,523

In tea plantation about 45 to 50% of the workers are women, while in coffee and rubber, about 40 and 25 respectively. In case of tea, children form about 15% of the total number of workers in Assam and 20 in Bengal and about 10% in South India. In the case of coffee and rubber their proportion is 10 and 5 respectively for India as a whole. Large proportion of women in tea plantations is to be found because, tea leaves require careful plucking and this work is more familiar to the females who have nimble fingers. Besides low wages which are paid to them, some facilities are also provided to male workers to settle on small farms in the vicinity so that while men work on farms, women could work on plantations.¹

Communications

Next to plantations comes the Communications Group, of which the Railways are the main employers. In 1931 transport employed 2·8 million persons, of which 636,311 were employed

¹ I. L. O.: *Industrial Labour in India*, 1938, pp. 35-36.

in Railways alone. The rest were engaged in operating various types of carts, ekkas, tongas, etc. Employment in Railways increased gradually till 1939, when the figures for the total employment was 699,153, and under the stress of war the employment figures reached 889,056 by 1944. In 1951, according to the Census Report 19 million persons were engaged in transport, storage and communications. Of this about 890,000 were employed in Road transport, 570,000 in Railway transport and 220,000 in Water transport. A very small number (13,000) appeared under Air transport.

The following table gives the average daily employment in Indian Railways :—

Year	No. of workers
1931	636,311
1936	712,364
1937	710,880
1939	699,153
1940	709,022
1942	757,706
1944	889,056
1950	923,154
1953	930,946
1954	966,181

The principal Port Trusts in India employ small number of workers, as would be clear from the following figures :—

	1944	1954
Bombay	26,015	15,160
Calcutta	18,000	24,361
Cochin	17,600	2,000
Madras	3,270	3,942

The principal towns having Tramcars are Calcutta, Bombay, Madras, and Delhi. In 1944, the total employment in these amounted to about 12,000. In 1951, they employed 17,740 workers in these cities.

Minings

The fourth and the next important group of industrial workers in India consist of those employed in the mines. Mines are any excavations for the purpose of searching for or obtaining minerals. The average daily number of workers employed in the mining and quarrying industry was 104,660 in 1901; 308,449 in 1911; 347,349 in 1921 and 346,000 in 1931; 347,018 in 1941 and 570,000 in 1951. During the forty years (1901-11), the number of workers increased by about 224%, while during the 1941-51 decade the number of workers increased by 154% over the 1941 figures. The

following table shows the changes in the proportion of mining workers to the total population of the country :—

	1911	1921	1931	1941	1951
1. Total Effective Strength in all mines ...	308,449	347,349	346,000	347,018	507,000
2. Percentage of the total workers in Primary Industries	0.32	0.33	0.35	0.30	0.48
3. Percentage of the total working population in India ...	0.21	0.23	0.22	0.20	0.29
4. Percentage of the total Indian population ...	0.09	0.10	0.09	0.08	0.14

It is worth noting that the increase in the total number of mine workers during 1911 to 1951 has not been proportionate to the increase in the number of workers engaged in Primary Industries or to the growth of India's total population and working population respectively. The possible explanation for lag is found in the unstable nature of mining labour class, which shuttles about a triangle formed by agriculture, mining and manufacturing, attracted by the highest wage rate offered by these industries in different years.

The following table gives figures for employment in mines subject to the Indian Mines Act, for specified years¹ :—

Year	Mines subject to Mining Act	Workers underground	Open Working	Surface	Total
1901	542	70,129	...	34,531	104,660
1924	1,804	167,719	...	90,498	258,217
1933	1,424	112,355	41,587	52,565	206,507
1939	1,864	146,827	76,559	81,858	305,244
1945	2,151	159,796	95,310	131,184	386,290
1947	1,976	151,200	103,295	152,768	407,263
1949	1,897	157,386	93,050	145,429	395,865
1950	2,085	190,320	114,861	166,580	471,761
1952	...	183,353	29,148	126,237	341,738
1953	...	181,973	28,866	126,957	337,796
1954	...	181,280	28,457	122,583	332,320

¹ *Industrial Labour in India*, p. 50; figures from 1939 onwards have been added from *Industrial Labour Year Book*, 1950-51.

The following table shows the age and sex distribution of workers in mines¹ :—

	Men		Women		
Year	No.	%	No.	%	
1901	..	69,025	65.9	30,438	29.2
1924	...	164,402	63.7	87,434	33.8
1933	...	171,038	82.8	35,469	17.2
1939	...	254,898	84.0	50,346	16.0
1945	...	291,312	76.0	94,978	24.0
1947	...	316,013	78.0	91,250	22.0
1948	..	314,363	80.0	81,502	20.0
1949	...	335,989	80.0	85,170	20.0
1950	...	375,255	80.0	96,506	20.0

Indian legislation prohibits the employment of children entirely in the mines ; and employment of women underground has also been prohibited.

It is interesting to note that over 85% of the total mining labour is employed in coal, mica and manganese ore mining industries. Labour employed in collieries is by far the largest and best organised group among the Indian miners, as will be clear from the table reproduced on the next page² :—

The labour force in our industries, mines and plantations is usually provided by the lowest and most unfortunate class of people, e.g., in coal mines, the largest single group are the *Bauris* of very low social rank. The rest largest group in coal mines are the *Santhals*. Similar low-caste groups make up a large part of the factory classes. The *Chamars*, *Mahars*, *Kolis*, *Pasis*, *Lunyas*, *Panchamas*, *Dheds* and *Sabbs* are the main elements of population who are drifted into industry. The landless workers whose numbers are increasing are forced to seek employment in the towns. Also the village artisans and craftsmen who find it difficult to stand the competition of the factories migrate to find employment in factories. The stream of workers from the village keeps on rising as the pressure on land increases.

The bulk of these forms the unskilled category in the factories of industrial towns and cities. While they are attracted by the lure

¹ *Indian Labour Year Book*, 1950-51, p. 8.

² *La tern Economist—Records and Statistics*, Vol. 8, No 2. (1957), p. 50.

MINING LABOUR

(Average Daily Number of Workers Employed)

	Total	Coal	Iron ore	Copper	Manganese ore	Mica	Others	Petroleum
1939	305,344	201,989	8,855	3,092	27,452	32,111	31,845	3,207
1940	328,196	209,173	10,118	3,614	35,159	36,641	33,491	2,644
1941	347,937	218,280	10,162	3,634	30,350	48,903	36,603	2,693
1942	357,646	215,086	10,332	3,730	32,214	56,801	39,383	3,605
1943	349,361	213,096	9,347	3,899	24,271	61,460	37,188	3,638
1944	364,948	255,364	8,166	4,030	15,797	47,245	34,346	3,892
1945	386,290	294,902	6,883	3,373	9,580	38,208	33,384	3,701
1946	412,719	323,992	7,043	3,757	10,659	32,940	34,328	3,524
1947	407,263	321,537	6,655	3,961	15,092	31,656	28,352	3,467
1948	395,865	308,263	7,068	3,628	16,068	31,490	29,348	3,404
1949	421,159	318,354	15,833	3,605	22,459	28,908	32,000	3,366
1950	471,761	349,889	17,379	3,655	34,952	31,010	34,876	3,468
1951	549,048	351,975	20,223	3,710	55,531	52,196	65,413	3,421
1952	559,196	348,663	26,387	3,880	74,750	41,044	64,472	3,476
1953	593,868	341,193	30,396	3,685	110,860	34,871	72,854	3,614
1954	568,254	340,364	30,772	4,052	84,821	27,335	80,310	3,354
1955	590,776	347,980	34,218	4,114	89,907	30,632	83,925	3,183

of higher wages, the instability of their employment, chronic house famine and high rents prevent them from settling down and bringing their families from the villages. Among this class the disparity of proportion of sexes is the largest, and this has given rise to such vices as drunkenness, gambling and prostitution.

When the Royal Commission on Labour reported, the working class in India was neither sufficiently organised nor properly stabilised. In recent years, however, there has been a greater concentration of the working class population in industrial areas and this has led to the rise of an industrial proletariat in most cities, which is prepared to stick to the town to a great extent. Such has been the case in Bombay, Kanpur, Nagpur, Madras and Ahmedabad, the labour for which have been drawn from great distances who tend to be stay-at-home in the towns. But unfortunately up till now, this class suffers from a number of disabilities. The shortage of housing accommodation—and the consequent crowdedness in the houses, the dirt and insanitation under which the workers have to live and work, coupled with complete absence of latrine, drinking water and medical facilities and town planning and the absence of that degree of social security which may be considered necessary, have all contributed to undermine the health and morale of the working class people with the result that today our industrial cities are the cess-pools of infectious diseases, high infantile and maternal mortality. With the poor housing conditions, sunk in indebtedness, living as inviting diseases of all kinds, the industrial factory workers live in an environment which is favourable to a revolutionary outburst in the form of strikes and lock-outs resulting in stringent relations between the employers and the employees. Gandhiji, therefore, insisted on the need for evolving harmonious relations between capital and labour. He observed, "I have been telling you ever since we came together that the industry is not exclusively for the millowners as millowners or the workers. The millowners have invested their capital, and your (labourers') capital is labour. Either would be worthless without the other. Hence, friendly relations should exist between the two." Unfortunately this spirit is still lacking in our country, for such harmony is inconceivable, unless certain fundamental rights are guaranteed to the labour. This should include, (i) the right to an adequate wage, (ii) the right to decent housing conditions, (iii) the right to education and opportunities for healthy recreation, (iv) right to influence industrial policy, and, above all the right to share increasingly in man's triumph over the environment, in man's increasing ability to command, as a result of his economic endeavour, not merely a bare competence, but a surplus.

Happily since Independence, the Central Government have realised that without satisfying this particular class, industrial development is impossible and hence it has recognised its duties

towards the Labour Class. Certain Articles of Part IV of the Constitution of India dealing with the Directive Principles of State Policy, lay down the policy which the Central and the State Governments should follow in connection with labour. The provisions are :—

“The State shall strive to, promote the welfare of the people by securing and protecting as effectively as it may, a social order in which justice, social, economic and political shall inform all instructions of the national life.” (Article 38)

“The state shall, in particular, direct its policy towards securing—

- (i) that the citizens, men and women equally, have the right to an adequate means of livelihood ;
- (ii) that the ownership and control of the material resources of the community are so distributed as to subserve the common good ;
- (iii) that the operation of the economic system does not result in the concentration of wealth and means of production to the common detriment ;
- (iv) that there is equal pay for equal work for both men and women ;
- (v) that the strength and health of workers, men and women, and the tender age of children are not abused and the citizens are not forced by economic necessity to enter avocations unsuited to their age or strength.
- (vi) that the childhood and youth are protected against exploitation and against moral and material abandonment.” (Article 39)

“The State shall, within the limits of its economic capacity and development, make effective provision for securing the right to work, to education and public assistance in case of unemployment, old age, sickness, disablement, and other cases of undeserved want.” (Article 41)

“The State shall make provisions for securing just and humane conditions of work and for maternity relief.” (Article 42)

“The State shall endeavour to secure, by suitable legislation or economic organisation or in any other way, to all workers, agricultural, industrial or otherwise, a living wage, conditions of work ensuring a decent standard of life and full employment of leisure and social and cultural opportunities.” (Article 43)

“The State shall promote with special care the educational and economic interests of the weaker sections of the peoples and shall protect them from social injustice and all forms of exploitation. (Article 46)

CHAPTER II

RECRUITMENT OF INDUSTRIAL LABOUR

Recruitment is the first step in the employment of labour and therefore the methods and organisation by means of which labour is brought into industry have a lot to do with the ultimate success or failure of such employment. In the early days of organised industry in India, factories and plantations found considerable difficulty in recruiting the necessary labour, on account of reluctance of workers to leave their villages and work in distant towns or plantations and mines under strange environments. Regarding the supply of labour the findings of the Royal Commission are:

(1) that the smaller centres everywhere draw on the surrounding rural areas for all the workers they require, except labour demanding special skill;

(2) that the only centres which have reached the stage of being compelled to go far afield for the bulk of their labour are Jamshedpur and the two big industrial areas of Bombay and Hooghly;

(3) that while in the West, factory workers are drawn mainly from amongst persons brought up in the towns, and partly from amongst those who have abandoned the country for the towns, the Indian factory operatives are nearly all migrants.

We have, however, to analyse here as to why the rural population feels the necessity of migrating to industrial towns and if at all it does so why the worker maintains contact with the villages and does not try to settle down permanently in industrial areas and whether this contact with the villages is in the interest of the industries and the efficiency of the workers.

From certain enquiries and investigations carried on from time to time it has been found out that only in seasonal industries dealing largely with agricultural products and in the mines, there is a substantial class directly interested in agriculture. In regular factory industries, however, the employer has passed the stage of being compelled to employ only those workers who are prepared to work for a few months and go back to the village, at the time of harvesting or sowing the crop. The truth behind the assertion, *i.e.* the agricultural character of the factory population is that the great majority of those employed are at heart villagers; they have had in most cases a village up-bringing, they have village traditions and, they retain some contact with the villages. Many of the workers are even prepared to give up industrial work if remunerative work can be secured in their villages and in any case they

earnestly hope to retire there permanently. But it is also not true that all the workers have a longing for the village. Royal Commission on Labour has rightly said, "With some, the contact is close and constant, with others it is slender or spasmodic and with a few it is more an inspiration than a reality".¹

Industrial States and their Labour Supply

About 54·3 % of the total number of industrial workers in India in 1951 were employed in the two States of West Bengal and Bombay; and 88·4% in the five States of Bengal, Bombay, U. P., Madras and Bihar. This means that the other areas have remained industrially backward and account only for 11·6% of the total number of workers employed. The following table shows this fact:—

PERCENTAGE OF THE TOTAL NUMBER OF INDUSTRIAL WORKERS IN INDIA

State	1921	1939	1943	1951
Bengal and Bombay	62·1	34·2	57·6	54·3
Bengal, Bombay, U. P., Madras and Bihar	8·31	85·9	84·4	88·4
Rest of India	16·9	14·1	15·6	11·6

It is interesting to note that although the share of Bengal and Bombay has decreased from 62·1% in 1921 to 54·3% in 1951, the share of Madras, U. P. and Bihar has increased from 21% of the total number of workers in 1921 to 26·8% in 1943 and 34·1% in 1951. The share of the rest of the country in the number of industrial workers has declined from 16·9% in 1921 to 15·6% in 1943 and 11·6% in 1951. This means that concentration of industry has now taken place in Madras, U. P. and Bihar at the cost of Bengal, Bombay and rest of the country.

However, Bombay is still the most important industrial State. It has cotton gins, presses and mills providing employment to about 2/3 of the men and over 4/5 of the women engaged as industrial workers in the State. More than half of these are employed in Bombay and the rest in the mills of Ahmedabad and Sholapur and in the gins and presses located in the cotton-producing districts such as Khandesh, Broach, Surat and Dharwar. A large part of the workers come from the State itself but the rest are immigrants from U. P., M. P., Rajasthan, Hyderabad and Madras into the cities of Bombay, Ahmedabad and Sholapur. The cultivating and labouring castes preponderate among the skilled and unskilled workers.

¹ *Report of the Royal Commission on Labour*, p 13

West Bengal is the second large industrial State. It has a large number of organised industries, viz., jute presses and factories situated along the river Hooghly in the vicinity of Calcutta and giving employment to nearly half of the men and more than 1/4 of the women engaged as industrial workers in the State. There are factories, mines, metal industry and railway workshops, oil and flour mills, brick and tile factories and printing presses, located in Calcutta and neighbouring areas. The workers belong to the State itself but the majority of the workers are immigrants. In fact there are 3 main currents of immigrants into Bengal—one consisting of labourers from Bihar, Orissa and eastern districts of U. P. into the industrial areas round Calcutta; the other consisting of poor agriculturists from Nepal and Chhota Nagpur plateau into the tea gardens of Jalpaiguri and Darjeeling and Cooch Behar and the last consisting of immigrants from Northern Bengal, Santhal Parganas and Assam, into Birbhum, Malda, West Denajpur and Tripura State.

In U. P. the demand for industrial labour is less than in the States of Bengal and Bombay because of the lack of industrial development to a great extent. In this State the most important industrial centres are Kanpur, Lucknow, Allahabad, Banaras, Agra, Bareilly, Saharanpur, Moradabad, etc. The labourers are Moham-madans and Chamars. Here there is a great paucity of labour due to very heavy density of population, small holdings and uncertain rainfall.

The States of Bihar and Orissa stand fourth as regards the industrial progress. They have mica, iron and manganese mining industries. The total number of workmen employed in the mines is 2,32,673. Most of the labour is local and a small portion being supplied by M. P. and Bengal. In the Iron and Steel Industry of Jamshedpur, the labour supply comes especially from M. P., Bengal and U. P.

In Madras there are textile and allied industries. Cotton gins and presses are situated at Bellary, Ramnad, Coimbatore and cotton spinning and weaving factories at Madras, Coimbatore, Madurai, Malabar, etc. The labour is mainly from depressed classes, agriculturists and Indian Christians.

In Assam tea industry, the labour is attracted from Chhota Nagpur, Bihar, U. P., M. P. and Madras. Here the plantations are situated in the Districts of Sylhet, Cachar, Danang, Sibsagar, and Lakhimpur—having an area of 1,473,626 acres and the number of plantations is 100. The average number of workers is 476,074; permanent garden labour 33,211; permanent outside labour and temporary outside labour 29,578.

The above survey shows that in the large industrial towns, the workers are bewilderingly heterogeneous. They come from different parts of the country, differ fundamentally in race, caste and

creed, have varying standards of living, and speak different languages and dialects which cannot be understood by each other. Nevertheless, they are herded together during the day time in the indiscriminate uniformity of factory life and spend the rest in the congested industrial quarters.

Types of Migration

The various types of migration are as under:—

(i) *Casual*. The chief cause of these minor movements is the custom, whereby parents seek wives for their sons in a different village from their own, and the fact that in some parts a young wife returns to her parents for confinement and especially for the first one.

(ii) *Temporary*. Due to the migration of coolies to meet the demand for labour on new canals and railway lines, to journeys on business and in connection with pilgrimages, marriage ceremonies and the like.

(iii) *Periodic*. Due to seasonal demand for labour; for example, the annual migration to the Sunderbans, and the wheat districts of upper India at harvest time, etc.

(iv) *Semi-permanent*. Where the inhabitants of one place earn their livelihood in another place, but maintain their connection with their old homes, where they leave their families and to which they ultimately return as and when convenient.

(v) *Permanent*. This type of migration is in the nature of colonization. It usually takes place when, owing to irrigation or improved communications or changes in political conditions, new lands become available for occupation. This type of migration has been witnessed in the pre-partitioned India to the canal colonies of the West Punjab and at the present time in the colonization schemes of the Central Government in Tarai region.

(vi) *Daily Migration*. In some industrial areas it is becoming common practice for persons to live outside the place of employment. This is apparent in Nagpur, Calcutta, Bombay and other cities. About 30,000 persons come daily into Calcutta, by train alone, to say nothing of those who use buses, trams or cars. In Nagpur and Ajmer, the office clerks and loco-works live even 25 to 30 and 10 to 15 miles away and come in by train to their work every morning, even trains being timed to suit the need. Villages in the neighbourhood of industrial centres provide workmen who come in daily to work and there is now a tendency towards suburban development around the city, with well-to-do people building residential quarters outside the municipal limits along the main highways. This tendency has grown more and more as municipal taxes and transportation improves.¹ In Bombay too, the daily migration from Dadar, Vile

¹ *Census of India, 1931, Vol. 1, Pt. I, p. 67.*

Parle, Matunga, Andheri, etc., is enormous; the cheap bus services and the electric trains provide easy transportation to the workers. In Kerala too daily migration is a common feature. But in U. P. daily migration is yet negligible because of the slow industrial development except in the centres of Kanpur, Agra and Bareilly, etc.

Causes of Migration

The causes of migration can be summed up as follows : (a) Increasing pressure of population on land on account of decline of the cottage industries; (b) the increasing number of landless agricultural labourers has forced them to earn their livelihood elsewhere; (c) Joint family system; (d) to evade the village moneylender; (e) depressed class people find better social treatment in cities and industrial towns; (f) family quarrels and worries. Mostly they come for higher wages but the conditions of work and chronic house famine prevent them from settling down in the cities.

The Bihar Labour Enquiry Committee conducted detailed investigations into the question of mobility of labour and have given statistics for certain centres in Bihar with regard to the occasional visits of workers to their villages. They found that in Jamshepur, out of a sample of 935 families, 714 paid an occasional visit to their village homes. In 390 or 55% of the cases the visits were on account of personal or social causes not connected with social ceremonies. Out of these, in 216 cases the reason given was meeting relations. In 210 cases or about 30% of the total, the visits were for social ceremonies. In 20 cases the cause of the visit was religious ceremonies, while in 94 cases the causes were economic, such as to build or repair houses, help in agriculture, etc."

"The City as such, has no attraction for him and when he leaves the villages he has seldom an ambition beyond that of securing the necessities of life. Few industrial workers would remain in industry if they could secure sufficient food and clothing in the village; they are pushed not pulled to the city."¹

Effect of Migration. Due to migration, the workers find altogether a different environment in all aspects, closed factories, strict discipline, different language, unfavourable climate, hard conditions of work, defective dietary, shortage of houses resulting in overcrowding and misery of slums. Moreover, in absence of suitable work for women and children, they have to be left behind in the villages. All these have serious effect on the psychology of the workers and lower their efficiency. Long hours of work without any rest and heavy strain on the body also impairs their efficiency. Enforced separation from the family allow them to fall an easy victim to the temptation of prostitution, drinking habits and gambling. Besides all these, the worker also does not put in disciplined and concentrated work because he is all the time thinking to go back to his village for some work or the other.

¹ *Report of the Royal Commission on Labour*, p. 16.

The migratory character has also got an adverse effect on industrial organisation and leads to unhealthy growth of trade unionism. Besides the frequent absence from work owing to repeated visits to the village places a serious obstacle in the way of establishing contacts between the employer and the employed and of building up the sense of co-operation.

Advantages of Migration. Contrary to all these ill-effects of migration there are certain advantages as well. The village homes provide a shelter whenever the workers get into difficulties owing to illness, epidemics, strikes, unemployment, or old age. Holidays for going home enable the workers to maintain better health and improve their efficiency. The possibility of getting work in industries lessens the pressure of population on land and serves as an insurance against uncertainties of agriculture. In support of these facts the Royal Commission on Labour was of the opinion that "in present circumstances the link with the village is a distinct asset, and that the general aim should be not to undermine it but to encourage it, and as far as possible to regularise it."¹ Dr. Radha Kamal Mukerjee is of the opinion that in order to keep co-ordination between village and the city, industrial planning and regional redistribution of Indian industries is very essential. He has said that, "If India is to escape from the deleterious social consequences of concentration of population in a few bee-hive industrial towns, the future industrial policy should aim at the transference or creation of organised industries near the sources of their raw materials and Labour market."² Further he has remarked that "Planned industrialisation in India will, in the first place, integrate the small cottage and decentralized industries with the bigger factories and workshops, bringing craftsmanship up to mass production standards and rehabilitating the former in both the urban and rural economy of the land. This would make the transition to full industrialization easier and at the same time combat the social dangers that are associated with large-scale industrial production concentrated in a few great industrial cities and towns. Secondly, it will bring about a close connection between agriculture and industry through the processing of agricultural products and raw materials."³

It should not be forgotten that these suggestions hold good for the future industrial set-up, but for those workers who come from distant places, who are landless labourers, who are getting accustomed to urban conditions and the charm of the city life, especially cinemas, electricity, school and medical facilities, etc., and only wish to settle in industrial towns, we have to improve the environmental the living and working conditions of the industrial areas.

¹ *Report of the Royal Commission on Labour*, p. 20

² R. K. Mukerjee, *Indian Working Class*, p. 13.

³ R. K. Mukerjee, *Op. Cit.*, p. 17.

Rege Committee was also of the opinion that, "Village nexus need not be encouraged, as most of the workers are landless labourers, and have no stake in agriculture. They might go to their villages for relaxation and rest for short period. The remedy, therefore, lies in improving the conditions in industrial terms as regards the work in factories, housing, wages and nutrition, and to provide measures of social security for the workers."¹

Keeping this migratory character of the Indian labourers in view and since 1921, owing to the enormous growth of population, unemployment in agriculture, lack of subsidiary occupations in the rural areas, improvement in the means of communications, etc., there are, as a general rule, no special efforts required to recruit new workers, outside the gates of a factory in an industrial area in any part of India, there are hundreds of unemployed found waiting every morning to be taken up as *badlis* in the place of those who are absent for shorter or longer periods.

Methods of Recruitment in Factories

Recruitment through intermediaries. The first system that came into existence is recruitment through intermediaries. Both organised and unorganised industries have largely depended upon a number of intermediaries such as *Jobbers* or *Sardars* or *Mistris* or *Mukedams* in order to establish contacts with labour in the villages and to bring the labourers to the cities. Labour has been very often attracted to the cities with promises of better wages, more comfortable employment, better amenities, etc., and even the intermediaries themselves have been offered attractive commission.

In a number of industrial establishments it used to be the practice until a few years ago to keep a certain number of workers on the daily list, and offer them a small daily allowance if there was no work for the day. But this practice has now practically disappeared. Certain mills are not only not paying any waiting allowance to the *badlis*, but enter into an agreement with them that no wages shall be paid while they are learning work. There is such a keen competition to secure even temporary work, that the workers do not hesitate to sign any agreement that is put before them, in the hope that at least after serving their apprenticeship for a few months, they will be entertained as regular workers with a fixed wage.

When a worker arrives for the first time in a city in search of employment, he is generally without any money, skill or influence. He spots out a relation, near or distant or an acquaintance in a factory and works through him. Recruitment of new workers is practically everywhere left to the *Mistri*, or the *Sardar*, or the

¹ *Labour Investigation Committee Report, 1946, p 871,*

Mukedam, or the *Jobber*. These are all-pervading and perform a number of tasks. In a large factory the jobbers, head jobbers, and women jobbers are known as *Naikins* or *Mukadmins*. They are responsible for the supervision of work of the operatives; for an adequate amount of work by them, and for minimising the fluctuations in the supply of labour. They sometimes act as mechanics and generally assist the unskilled worker. Their importance is due to their being intermediaries, between the employer or the factory manager and the body of workers. These intermediaries enjoy greater power over the workers specially when the managers of the factories are Europeans, because the latter's knowledge of different vernaculars is often very defective, and because they have to be frequently away on furloughs for the sake of their health.¹ A jute worker, for instance, cannot ordinarily get into touch with the manager without passing through the hands of, firstly the line of Sardars, secondly the head Sardar, thirdly the Babu, fourthly the European overseer, and fifthly the European Assistant manager. The result is that he can seldom get through them all to the manager.

As these jobbers possess the power of engaging or dismissing workers they extort an unauthorised commission called '*Dasturi*', as the price of engagement, or re-engagement after a term of absence, and a smaller commission every month, out of the wages of the workers. The bribe may be in cash—a few rupees, perhaps the first month's earnings, supplemented in many cases by personal service in the house of the jobber, or a supply of vegetables, milk or ghee. The jobber is not the only one to be satisfied, there are head jobbers, pay clerks, time-keepers, and in some cases the supervising staff. The extent of bribery can be realised from the fact that while they get wages, varying from Rs. 50 to Rs. 70 per month, their commission ranges from Rs. 100 to Rs. 300 per month. One result of this is that the overseers recruit not necessarily the efficient men, but those who are willing to pay them the largest commission, or in whom they are otherwise interested.

The Royal Commission has nicely summarised the abuses of this system in the following words ¹ :—

"The temptations of the jobber's position are manifold and it would be surprising if these men failed to take advantage of their opportunities. There are few factories where a worker's security is not, to some extent, in the hands of a jobber; in a number of factories the latter has in practice the power to engage and to dismiss a worker. We are satisfied that it is a fairly general practice for the jobber to profit financially by the exercise of this power. The evil varies in intensity from industry to industry and from centre to centre. It is usual for a fee to be exacted as the

¹ Kelman, *Labour in India*, pp. 102.

² Quoted by Panandikar in *Industrial Labour in India*.

price of engagement, or of re-employment after a period of absence. In many cases a regular payment has also to be made out of each month's wages. In other cases workers have to supply the jobber with drink or other periodical offerings in kind. The jobber himself has at times to subsidise the head jobber; and it is said that even members of the supervising staff sometimes receive a share of the bribe."

The Commission also suggested that by systematic efforts bribery could be substantially reduced if not eliminated. The methods advocated were that the jobbers should be excluded from the engagement and dismissal of labour, and suitable labour officers be appointed directly subordinate to the general manager, not necessarily equipped with technical qualifications, but rather men of integrity, an attractive personality, and endowed with a sympathetic imagination. The Commission was so impressed with the necessity of stamping out bribery and corruption that it recommended that employer should seek the co-operation of trade unions in achieving this end.¹

While women workers share with men the domination of the intermediaries, they are more liable to be oppressed by them. Widows and women deserted by their husbands are more liable to be bullied and oppressed than other women workers, as usually they have none to protect them and hence they have to suffer in silence injustice and tyranny of many minds at the hands of the jobber. When the women workers are many, they are supervised by women overseers known as *naikins* or *mukadmins*. In most cases these have proved even more rapacious and oppressive than the men overseers, as they have found the women workers more helpless and more submissive. Many of them are women of low character, and several managers have found it difficult to get good workers to accept the position, in spite of better pay, because it is not regarded as respectable. When the wrath of *naikins* is aroused against men, some of them are known to have hired ruffians to give a severe thrashing to their enemies. In this respect the Labour Commission suggests the appointment of educated women to take charge of the supervision and welfare of women workers.

On this question the Royal Commission observers: "When the shortage was acute the employer had to send into the highways and byways to obtain workers, overseers, labour contractors and others stimulated thereto by promises of commission journeyed to distant villages and brought back recruits to the mills, paying their fees and expenses to the city. Such methods are still employed for many industries, particularly planting, mining; but now the great majority of managers of perennial factories need go no further than their own gates to obtain the workers they require.

¹ *Report of the Royal Commission on Labour*, p. 24.

² *Ibid.*, p. 25

Unfortunately the removal of the market for labour from the village to the factory gate has not generally meant the assumption by the employer of direct responsibility for the engagement of his own workers. This duty is still left largely to intermediaries and especially to jobbers.¹ The methods of recruitment mentioned above obtain in most of the perennial factories as also in seasonal factories in varying degrees.

Direct Recruitment

Nowadays a part of the labour is directly recruited in the States of Bombay, Madras, and the Punjab. The general procedure for direct recruitment is exhibition of a notice at the factory gate that so much labour is required. Then the Manager or any other official comes to the gate and selects the necessary labour. However, such methods are generally effective for securing unskilled or substitute labour. Recruitment of skilled and semi-skilled labour is more difficult and is made either by promoting more efficient workers or by selection after some trade test. Recruitment is also direct in some of the unregulated industries like Bidi-making, Shellac, coir-making etc.

Recruitment in 50% of the cotton mills in Bombay, Bata Shoe Co. at Calcutta, the Scindia Shipyard at Vishakhapatnam, jute mills in Bengal and in a number of mills at Kanpur is mostly made through the Labour officers. In Ahmedabad, recruitment is generally made through Jobbers and Heads of Departments. The Buckingham and Carnatic Mills at Madras take the help of trade unions also in this respect. At Kanpur, besides Labour Officers in a number of Mills; a Labour Bureau is being run by the Employers' Association of Northern India since 1938. Badli system is very common in jute mills of Bengal.

In Bihar many factories still follow the age-old method of recruitment, i.e. employment at the gate through contractors and Sardars, though bigger factories have set up their own Labour Bureaus for recruitment, while some others recruit their labour through the Employment Exchanges.

In Bombay, Ahmedabad and Sholapur textile mills labourers are registered under the Decasualisation scheme.

In Orissa casual labourers are recruited generally at the factory gates. Skilled and permanent workers are recruited by the factories direct. So is also the case in the Punjab.

In West Bengal some factories have set up Labour Offices for the purpose of recruitment, while in others recruitment is made through E. E. or at the gates.

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 22-23.

In M. P. labourers are generally recruited through jobbers in large factories while in smaller and seasonal factories the employers recruit the workers directly.

EMPLOYMENT OF FACTORIES ACCORDING TO THE STATES¹

States		Average Daily number of workers employed				
		1951	1952	1953	1954	1955
Andhra	...	N A	N A.	96,339	108,840	117,514
Assam	...	65,136	661,620	63,748	65,290	68,647
Bihar	...	191,724	172,468	169,771	170,521	172,062
Bombay	...	767,704	744,509	782,679	809,895	863,029
Madhya Pradesh	...	110,994	110,842	122,110	122,204	130,576
Madras	...	417,545	400,377	310,035	328,677	327,926
Orissa	...	17,186	18,088	18,419	20,174	20,328
Punjab	...	48,175	52,822	45,960	54,586	63,712
Uttar Pradesh	...	202,514	206,832	242,380	239,874	245,613
West Bengal	...	654,901	626,631	627,160	609,925	616,739
Ajmer	...	16,027	15,603	15,384	14,452	14,609
Goorg	...	366	380	385	458	468
Delhi	...	42,635	36,993	41,174	48,826	47,252
Andaman and Nicobar	...	1,637	1,264	1,482	2,035	1,928
Total Islands	...	2,536,544	2,567,453	2,528,026	2,589,757	2,690,403

The following table shows the analysis of workers employed in factories of different types in Part A States and Delhi, Ajmer, Coorg and Andaman and Nicobar Islands :—

NUMBER OF WORKERS EMPLOYED (in thousands)

Factories	1945	1947	1948	1953
Textile	1014	1008	1047	1022
Engineering	315	357	370	300
Minerals & Metals	125	89	109	146
Food, Drink & tobacco	310	303	348	427
Chemicals dyes, etc.	101	95	120	77
Paper & Printing	72	78	85	90
Wood, stones & glass	107	94	105	110
Skins & Hides	36	29	29	30
Gins & Presses	129	83	74	84
Ordnance factories	186	78	84	70
Miscellaneous	247	53	62	57

¹ Labour Year Book (1953-4), 1955, p. 2 and Indian Labour Gazette, March, 1957, p. 740.

Recruitment of Labour in Plantation Industry

Plantation labour in India presents peculiar features of its own. It is undoubtedly in the tea plantation that serious abuses have occurred in regard to recruitment of labour. Their inaccessibility prevented the light of public opinion from playing on these remote areas. The bulk of the recruits are from the aboriginal areas of Chhota Nagpur, M. P., and the agency tracts in the Northern Circars of the Madras State, a distance of several hundred miles, much of it by rail with some changes en route, and involving crossing of rivers, the last stage being up the hills in the motor lorries. Recruiting is an expensive item for the tea industry because of the great distances to be traversed and the necessity of maintaining a staff and depots in recruiting areas.

Recruitment of labour for the plantations, whether in the north or in the south, presents certain common features, although the difficulties and complexities are much greater in the case of Assam and only less so in the case of Dooars in North Bengal. The South India plantations have their recruiting grounds very much nearer than those of the north. But the Madras State has always had a large superfluous agricultural population which has supplied without difficulty the labour required for the plantations. The planters have an organisation with a network of branches in several of the surrounding districts from which labour is drawn, and recruitment is effected through agents called *Kanganies*. Money is advanced to the *Kanganies* in order to induce workers to come to the plantations. Abuses have been common in connection with the system, in many cases only a portion of the amount being actually given. Here the pressure of population and lack of employment are causes which compel the superfluous population of the plains to seek a livelihood somewhere under any conditions. A failure of rains, agricultural distress and the treatment given to the untouchables in the rural areas are factors helpful to the plantations. However, the Government of India formulated a scheme limiting the number of labourers under each 'kangani' to 40 and providing for the establishment of estate gangs. This scheme has been accepted by Madras, Mysore and Coorg Government. In Kerala the recruitment is done through estate gangs.

In regard to Assam and the Dooars in Bengal recruitment presents a more formidable problem because of the long distances from which labour has to be brought and the substantial costs involved in the process. According to the evidences of the European Missionaries before the Labour Commission, the cause of emigration was extreme poverty. They complained that young unmarried girls were enticed and disappeared, and married girls were decoyed by false promises. The Sardars did not hesitate, if pushed to necessity, to use sometimes even illegal means to obtain labour-girls, whether married or unmarried. They were taken by devious ways to the depot by the Sardar who, in order to avoid detection changed the names of

his victims, and a number of cases were on record in which the Sardars had supplied alcohol or drugs to their victims before enticing them away. Similar evidence comes from the agency tracts of the Madras State and also from European missionaries. Family life, they observed, was being broken up, and one of them referred to "selling men" to Assam. Among the chief reasons which, they alleged, led to the emigration from those areas were a desire to earn more money or the indebtedness of the emigrants without any other way of paying off their debts, family quarrels—one man taking away the wife of another, or perhaps the daughter not wanting to marry the man of her father's choice—or the commission of some crime. The planters of Assam sought protection for themselves through Workmen's Breach of Contract Act which was passed in 1859 and repealed only in 1926, but very little efforts were made either by the Government or by the planters to acquaint the workers with that vital change, with the result that a considerable portion of the workers still thought that they were not free. The Commission said in this respect that it was a matter of great regret that when a vital change was made in the land, by which penal contracts became illegal, little was done to bring it to the notice of the workers and recommended that immediate steps should be taken in this direction. Another difficulty which made recruitment unpopular was that the workers in the tea gardens had no facilities for maintaining contacts with their homes even by correspondence. But now there has undoubtedly been some improvement in regard to recruitment since the Tea Districts Emigrant Labour Act of 1932 was brought into force in October, 1933. This measure provides for the appointment of a controller of emigrant labour and invests him with certain powers to safeguard the interests of the workers. A worker and his family are entitled to repatriation at the expense of the planter. The period of service which entitled a worker to this privilege may be curtailed for ill-health or some other special cause. Persons under the age of 16 cannot be emigrated unless accompanied by their parents or guardians, and the women cannot be recruited without the consent of their husbands. Persons recruited by the licensed local forwarding agents from the controlled emigration areas like Bengal, Bihar, Orissa, Madhya Pradesh, Madras and Uttar Pradesh have to be produced at the nearest local forwarding agencies and then are despatched to Assam by the prescribed routes along which there are depots where the persons are given rest, meals and sleeping accommodation and medical aid if required. There is another method also for recruitment and is known as Pool system. Labourers voluntarily present themselves to the local Forwarding Agents' Depots for recruitment. They are sent out to the gardens which need their services. Nearly all the recruitment is done by the Tea Districts Labour Association set up by the tea industry itself, which makes arrangements for forwarding of recruits while the actual recruitment is done by the intermediaries who get a commission. The cost of recruitment per adult labour was

Rs. 124-14-6 in 1950-51 and Rs. 136-9-8 in 1953-54.¹ In West Bengal there is generally an acute shortage of labour in the tea estate at Jalpaiguri and Teia, particularly in the busy season. Workers are recruited from Santhal Parganas, Manbhum and Ranchi. Recruitment in Bengal is uncontrolled and is made by the Tea Districts Labour Association, the Indian Tea Planters' Association and the Indian Tea Association for their member gardens.

In Bihar labourers for tea gardens in Purnea are recruited from Ranchi District, while tea gardens in Ranchi District obtain their labour locally. In the tea gardens in Bihar recruitment is generally made by garden Sardars who collect prospective recruits and bring them before the Forwarding Agents, who have to satisfy themselves that the recruits are volunteers and know fully the conditions of service. All the incidental expenses and railway fares from home to tea gardens are met by the estates.

In the Punjab plantations, recruitment is made by the employers directly or through Choudhies (Labour Mates) from the neighbouring villages. The following table gives statistics of recruitment of Assam tea gardens during the years 1949-50 and 1950-51:—

RECRUITMENT TO ASSAM TEA PLANTATION, BY STATE OF ORIGIN
(Number of emigrants)

State of Origin	1949-50		1950-51	
	Assisted	Non-Assisted	Assisted	Non-Assisted
W. Bengal	19	5	46	22
Bihar	10038	2560	15131	3025
Orissa	9670	2039	12459	3505
M. P.	4564	1001	7769	1258
Madras	880	139	1082	187
U. P.	112	46	—	—
Bombay	1185	319	1613	642
Total	26468	6109	38100	8639

¹ *Indian Labour Year Book* 1950-51, p. 35, *Ibid* for 1953-54, p. 24

Unlike North India, in South workers are recruited for a period of 9 to 10 months only after which they return to home and come back to the work after some rest. In order to do away with the abuses associated with the system of recruitment through *kanganies*, some of the coffee estates and many of the rubber estates employ professional labourer suppliers who are registered by the Labour Department of the United Planters' Association of Southern India which helps these suppliers in the recruitment of labour. The table on the next page gives us details about the employment figures in the plantations.

Recruitment of Labour for Mining areas

Recruitment of labour for the mining areas specially coalfields of Jharia, Raniganj, Giridih and Bokaro, is through the *raising contractors* who are responsible for the supply of labour, and have to be paid from Rs. 2 to Rs. 3 per month for every worker. These raising contractors are not only in charge of recruitment and bear all its expenses but are responsible for the coal cutting and loading for which they are paid at a certain rate per ton. Bribery is fairly extensive on the coalfields. The majority of the workers are hill and forest aboriginals largely the Santhals, as the collieries are located in or near the regions inhabited by them. There are both the miners as well as the agriculturists returning to their fields as they do for days, weeks or months and hence the supply of labour in the mines varies from month to month, the largest supply being available in February and September and the smallest in July and November.

The Royal Commission on Labour condemned in vigorous language the existence of contractors, and suggested direct relationship between the colliery managers and the workers. The Industrial Committee on Coal Mining considered the question of abolition of contractors in coal mines but at last allowed the system to continue till further investigation and the raising contractor still flourishes. Of course in 1951 they have recommended for the abolition of this system and till then the disabilities suffered by contract labour vis-a-vis labour directly employed should be removed or minimised. The employers also agreed to consider a proposal to associate a workers' representative with the administration of the coal recruiting organisation.

There are difficulties in regard to recruitment, seasonal difficulties, as at the time of sowing and harvesting when large numbers return to their villages and output of coal diminishes; and those created by the recent enforcement of law excluding women from working underground. These have led to a shortage of labour in the collieries. Once during the War, the Government also acted as contractors for the supply of unskilled labour owing to the scarcity of labour and the urgency of coal requirements.

In other mining industries the position is somewhat different. The iron ore mining companies have the system of direct recruitment

EMPLOYMENT IN PLANTATIONS

1951

1952

	Garden Labour (Permanent)	Outside Labour		Total	Garden Labour (Permanent)	Outside Labour		Total
		Perma- nent	Tempo- rary			Perma- nent	Tempo- rary	
Tea	900,909	63,244	53,836	10,17,989	919,918	51,072	53,218	10,24,208
Coffee	82,917	21,888	46,372	1,51,177	76,566	27,322	60,716	1,64,604
Rubber	19,238	8,689	15,258	43,185	19,230	7,578	12,715	39,523
Total	10,03,064	93,821	1,15,466	12,12,351	10,15,714	85,972	1,26,649	12,28,335

EMPLOYMENT IN PLANTATIONS, 1952

	Number of estates	Total area of estates (acres)	Average daily number of persons Employed			Total
			Garden Labour	Outside Labour		
				Permanent	Permanent		Temporary
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
TEA						
Assam ...	971	384,880	465,770	29,545	29,585	524,900
Bihar ...	8	3,682	2,097	417	618	3,132
Madras ...	1,960	82,706	77,503	8,419	5,981	91,903
Punjab ...	2,629	9,145	673	1,858	6,014	8,545
Uttar Pradesh ...	40	5,816	1,838	525	621	2,984
West Bengal ...	313	193,349	311,097	4,777	6,805	322,679
Mysore ...	9	4,715	2,430	1,626	1,098	5,154
Travancore-Cochin	236	81,165	52,675	3,504	1,897	58,076
Coorg ...	1	449	501	...	...	501
Himachal Pradesh	328	1,002	8	...	80	88
Tripura ...	49	10,258	5,326	401	520	6,247
Total ...	6,544	777,167	919,918	51,072	53,219	10,24,209
COFFEE*						
Madras ...	1,911	62,728	30,466	9,639	26,515	66,620
Orissa ...	12	25	13	...	...	13
Mysore ...	at 4,418	at 107,507	28,600	10,196	24,143	62,939
Travancore-Cochin†	44	8,300	2,034	904	521	3,459
Coorg ...	4,829	50,822	14,453	6,583	9,537	31,573
Total ...	11,214	122,932	76,566	27,322	60,716	1,64,604
RUBBER**						
Madras ...	173	69,618	2,655	1,689	1,802	6,146
Mysore ...	9	2,927	55	309	915	1,279
Travancore-Cochin	9,981	146,642	15,836	5,580	9,978	31,391
Coorg ...	6	5,090	684	...	20	704
Total ...	9,169	224,277	19,230	7,578	12,715	39,523
GRAND TOTAL...	26,927	1,230,826	1,015,714	85,972	126,650	1,228,336

*Figures for coffee estates relate to 1952-53 **Figures in respect of reserve forests in Trichur District of Travancore-Cochin for 1950 have been repeated. †In the case of Travancore-Cochin figures for 1951-52 have been repeated ‡Figures for 1951-52 have been repeated. †Provisional

SUMMARY OF ALL MINERALS 1953

State	Under-ground	Open workings		Surface		Total
	Men	Men	Women	Men	Women	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Assam ...	2,683	529	48	1,175	515	4,950
West Bengal ...	57,452	3,461	868	23,649	10,724	96,154
Bihar ...	100,858	34,705	17,182	57,494	25,303	235,542
Madhya Pradesh ...	19,636	35,078	29,125	14,217	6,919	104,975
Orissa ...	4,078	12,140	9,477	8,483	4,841	39,019
Vindhya Pradesh ...	4,554	1,919	710	2,497	678	10,358
Hyderabad ...	10,097	213	23	5,825	1,085	17,243
Rajasthan ...	2,699	4,382	1,074	2,256	564	10,975
Madhya Bharat ...	...	743	333	59	13	1,148
Andhra ...	3,221	9,307	5,232	1,733	1,998	21,491
Bombay ...	438	4,781	2,110	1,738	516	9,583
Madras ...	140	3,802	2,435	616	146	7,189
Delhi ...	47	25	7	26	...	105
Ajmer ...	304	580	124	220	1	1,229
Mysore ...	13,010	3,720	3,079	8,626	1,325	29,760
Travancore-Cochin ...	...	1,686	13	1,132	...	2,831
PEPSU ...	14	297	128	302	16	752
Himachal Pradesh...	28	...	...	38	9	75
East Punjab ...	7	471	...	11	...	489
Total ...	219,266	117,839	72,013	130,097	54,653	593,868

Labour for contract work, of course, is recruited through Sardars and Sub-contractors. In Mica Mines specially in Bihar, labour is recruited through Sardars and their wages depend on the number of workers recruited by them.

The following table gives us the number of mine workers after independence¹ :—

Year	Mines subject to Mining Act	Workers under-ground	Open workings	Surface	Total
1947	1976	151,200	103,295	152,768	407,263
1948	1897	157,386	93,050	145,429	395,865
1949	2032	166,906	101,229	153,024	421,159
1950	2085	190,320	114,861	166,580	471,761
1952	...	221,297	155,438	182,461	559,196
1953	...	219,266	189,852	184,750	593,868

¹ Wadia & Merchant, *Our Economic Problem*, p. 455, *India—A Reference Annual* 1955, p. 417.

Recruitment of Seamen

The recruitment of seamen is similarly beset with difficulties of a peculiarly formidable nature. Shipping in India has been practically a monopoly of European Companies who have objected to any interference with the system of recruitment. The Enquiry Committee, appointed by the Government of India to enquire into the system of recruitment of seamen, reported that the system of recruitment had led to grave abuses and recommended the setting up of employment bureau under officers with practical marine experience to obtain for the workers continuity of employment and relief from bribery. Licensed brokers and other intermediaries for the recruitment have not been abolished, though in theory their powers have been curtailed. According to the Seamen's Union in Bombay, there is unemployment at any time; therefore only a third of the total number of seamen are found in the neighbourhood of the shipping office in Bombay who have been out of employment for periods varying from one to four years.

Indian Merchants' Shipping Act was amended in 1949 to regulate the employment of marine labour. The Act lays down that the Central Government can establish at such ports as they think fit Seamen's Employment Offices for this purpose and where such an office has been established or a person or body of persons nominated to perform such functions, no person shall receive or accept to be entered on board any ship any seaman unless such a seaman has been engaged through or supplied by such office or person or body or persons nominated.

The number of seamen engaged in Bombay during 1953-54 was about 30,640 and in Calcutta 29,000. .

Recruitment at Ports

Employment at ports was formerly through petty contractors called *Tolwalas* but since April 1948 this system has been abolished. Now, in the ports of Bombay, Calcutta and Madras, employment is regulated under the Dock Workers (Regulation of Employment) Act 1948. The scheme under this Act is administered by Dock Labour Boards consisting of representatives of Government, Employers and Dock Workers. The Board has an executive officer who maintains an employers' register and a workers' register and allocates registered workers to registered employers making the fullest possible use of the reserve pool. The table on page 36 gives employment in Major Ports in June 1950.¹

Recruitment in Railways and Tramways

Recruitment in Railways is mostly through Railway Service Commissions or by promotions from junior to senior class service. In tramways at Delhi, recruitment of the staff is made by the Selection Board. In Calcutta, it is made through employment exchanges

¹ *Labour Year Book*, 1949-50, p. 19.

Name of the Port	Number of persons employed			Average No. of daily workers directly employed by the Port Act
	Direct	Through contractors	By Stewards etc.	
Bombay ...	14,681	238	2,965	15,160
Calcutta ...	23,865	234	N. A.	24,361
Madras ...	2,280	70	N. A.	3,942
Vishakhapatnam	2,029	...	1,300	2,276
Cochin ...	1,473	828	1,208	2,000

or directly from the relatives of the employees. So is the case in Madras. In Bombay, vacancies are filled in by inviting applications through newspapers, notices and labour exchanges.

In March 1952, the railway workers were estimated at 9,45,319 and in January 1952 tramways employed 1,70,855 workers. In 1953 and 1954, about 930,951 and 966,185 workers were employed in the railways.

The following table shows the total number at staff in railways :—

Railways	1953	1954
Railways—Govt. owned	916,002	950,101
Central	167,672	174,307
Eastern	248,509	251,384
Northern	132,963	141,568
North Eastern	107,871	112,766
Southern	147,480	152,350
Western	111,507	117,726
Non-Govt. Railways	6,671	6,762
Railway Board and other Ry. Offices.	8,278	9,322
Grand Total	930,951	966,185

Contract Labour

The contract labour is mostly employed in the Public Works Department, Engineering Departments and also in some cotton textile, paper, cement, coir-matting industries and mining as well. They form about 20 to 25% of the total labour force. Even in such a well-organised and long-established industry like gold mining in Kolar, 6,358 workers out of 19,936 were under contractors. Among many other abuses one serious drawback is that in a factory, mine or workshop the contract labour is here today and gone tomorrow and it becomes difficult for the administrators of the law to come to

grip with the system. In this connection the Royal Commission has rightly remarked, "Workmen employed by salaried managers, who are personally responsible for their workers, receive more consideration than those employed by contractors.....it is now desirable, if the management is to discharge completely the complex responsibility laid upon it by the law and by equity, that the manager should have full control over the selection, hours of work and payment of the workers."¹ In fact the abuses are mostly due to the fact that contractor has obtained his contract by virtue of his being the lowest bidder for the work, and naturally unless he pays low wages and intensifies the pace of work, he cannot earn any profit. Ultimately this results in the sweating of labour. Another evil is that the employers themselves gain financially by having contract labour because they escape the responsibility for any welfare work, etc., for them. In view of these considerations, it seems desirable that the system of contract labour should be substituted by direct system of recruitment.

Badli System

In order to give regular employment to *Badlis* and to eliminating the influence exercised by the Jobber badli control system has been devised. Under the system, on the first of each month special *Badli* cards are given to a selected number of persons who are asked to present themselves every morning at the mill when temporary vacancies are filled up from among them and for permanent post chance is given according to seniority. For the purpose of the scheme, workers have been classified as permanent, temporary and badli and service certificates are issued to registered workers and the length of service is considered in providing jobs.

Absenteeism

In Indian industries, the common complaint is that of a large percentage of absenteeism. Absenteeism rate is defined as "the total man-shift lost because of absences as a percentage of the total number of man-shifts scheduled." For calculating the rate of absenteeism is required the number of persons scheduled to work and the number actually present. A worker who reports for any part of a shift is to be considered as present. "An employee is to be considered scheduled to work when the employer has work available and the employee is aware of it, and when the employer has no reason to expect, well in advance, that the employee will not be available for work at the specified time."

The table on page 38 shows figures for absenteeism in manufacturing industries and coal mines.³

¹ *Report of the Royal Commission on Labour*, p. 119.

² *Indian Labour Gazette*, March 1957, pp 758-759 and 762.

ABSENTEEISM IN MANUFACTURING INDUSTRIES IN INDIA
(Percentage of man-shifts lost to man-shifts scheduled to work)

Industry	1947	1948	1949	1950	1951	1952	1953	1954	1955	1956
1. Cotton Mill Industry										
Bombay	14.7	13.3	15.9	14.5	12.7	12.7	12.6	10.8	8.2	8.3
Ahmedabad	6.4	5.9	7.4	8.4	8.3	8.8	9.4	8.7	6.8	6.5
Sholapur	19.1	18.1	21.3	20.1	18.7	20.2	20.5	17.4	18.0	18.4
Madras	10.3	9.1	8.6	9.5	8.9	9.7	9.3	9.1	6.6	6.2
Madurai	14.7	13.9	13.1	14.6	11.3	10.5	10.9	11.0	12.2	13.0
Coimbatore	13.8	9.6	8.1	9.7	10.0	10.3	8.2	8.8	9.9	11.4
Kanpur	16.1	16.1	15.6	16.1	12.0	11.7	12.3	12.4	12.8	11.1
2. Woollen Industry										
Kanpur	11.5	10.6	11.0	12.5	13.2	9.4	11.0	10.7	10.6	7.3
Dhariwal	...	...	...	9.3	10.6	6.3	5.0	5.2	5.0	5.2
3. Engineering Industry										
Bombay	3.8	13.4	13.6	13.1	13.9	13.4	13.7	14.9	15.6	14.6
West Bengal	...	...	...	11.1	10.1	10.3	10.8	11.7	12.8	12.5
4. Telegraph Work Shops										
(All-India)	...	...	...	8.1	8.5	9.0	10.0	12.0	12.1	12.9

5. Tramway Shop (All-India)	...	...	15.7	13.0	10.6	7.0	7.1	7.2	8.1
6. Iron & Steel Industry (All-India)	...	14.3	15.5	12.4	11.0	10.9	12.0	11.4	11.6
7. Ordnance Factories (All-India)	10.6	8.5	8.0	8.9	8.6	9.4	9.9	11.8	12.4
8. Cement Factories (All-India)	12.2	10.9	10.1	10.6	11.8	11.5	11.9	12.1	12.2
9. Match Factories (All-India)	12.4	10.9	10.8	11.0	10.5	10.6	10.1	10.4	10.1
10. Leather Industry (All-India)	15.5	8.0	11.3	8.4	7.8	9.2	9.2	9.8	11.2
11. Coal Mining Industry									
Underground	...	...	...	...	...	...	15.0	14.5	15.1
Open working	...	...	...	...	...	...	15.1	16.0	15.7
Surface	...	...	...	...	...	...	10.8	10.8	11.1
Overall	...	...	...	...	...	...	13.5	13.3	13.8

It will be observed from the above table that the percentage of absenteeism is much higher in coal mining industry than in other organised industries. This high percentage of absenteeism in the coal mining is due to, (i) the engagement of the labourers in the fields, marriages and festivals—which account for about 75% of the withdrawals; (ii) drunkenness and relaxation—which account for about 20% of the absence; and (iii) Sickness accounting for about 5% of absence. While absenteeism percentage is lower in the organised industries because of the fact that a larger proportion of the factory labour force resides at or near the factories than in other areas.

The loss due to absenteeism is two-fold. *Firstly*, there is a distinct loss to workers, because the irregularity in attendance reduces their income, when “no work no pay” is the general rule. The loss to the employers is still greater as both deficiency and discipline suffer. *Secondly*, either an additional employment has to be maintained throughout the year to meet this emergency or the industries have to depend solely on workers who present themselves at the gates and who are generally not up to the mark. The maintenance of an extra complement of workers leads to serious complications and evils.

Absenteeism is more due to miserable working and living conditions than due to any other reason. The chief causes are fatigue, sickness, industrial accidents, disgusting housing conditions, social and religious ceremonies, drinking, amusements and the frequent urge of the rural exodus. Moreover, the level of absenteeism is comparatively high immediately after the pay day, when the workers either feel like having a ‘good time’, or in some other cases, return to their villages to make purchases for the family and to meet them¹. Watkins and Dodd observe, “In industries where the work is excessively fatiguing, periodical absence from the job constitutes a sort of defence mechanism for the hired workmen and tends to prevent the abnormal accumulation of fatigue poisons and a resultant breakdown in health”².

Therefore, “proper conditions of work in the factory, adequate wages, protection from accident and sickness and facilities for obtaining leave for rest and recuperation constitute the most effective means of *reducing absenteeism*.”³ There is no doubt that the most effective way of dealing with absenteeism is to provide holidays with pay or even without pay and permit workers to attend to their private affairs occasionally and thus regularise absenteeism instead of merely taking disciplinary action for it. Provision of suitable housing and working conditions in industrial centres would also go a long way in improving attendance.

¹ *Labour Investigation Committee Report*, p. 101.

² Watkins and Dodd, *The Management of Labour Relations*, 1938, pp 259-60.

³ *Bombay Textile Labour Inquiry Committee Report*, p 364.

Labour Turn-over

Labour turnover may be defined as the rate of change in the working staff of a concern during a definite period. It is a measure of the extent to which old employees leave and new employees enter the service of the concern. Labour turnover is the cause and effect of instability of employment. It arises from resignations and dismissals. Resignations may be due to such causes as dissatisfaction with working conditions, insufficient wages, bad health, sickness, old age, family circumstances and exodus to the village for agricultural operations. Dismissals, on the other hand, appear to be a lesser cause of labour turnover. Dismissals may be due to disciplinary action in cases of inefficiency, insubordination, participation in strikes, misconduct and victimisation of workers.

Labour turnover, especially among the temporary workers, is also accounted for by the discharge of workers when a particular piece of work for which they have been taken in is completed. The *Badli* system also contributes to a high labour turnover.

Some amount of labour turnover is in any case inevitable and the natural turnover which arises due to retirement of aged employees and accession of fresh blood, may not only be unavoidable but also welcome to some extent. A higher rate of turnover is harmful to the efficiency of the worker as well as to the quality and quantity of production. It is a serious obstacle to the complete utilisation of a country's human and material resources. "From the workers' side they are not only deprived of various advantages of continued employment—opportunities of a graded pay, bonus, provident fund and leave—but they have to even purchase their re-engagement; and there is bound to be less solidarity among workers who move from mill to mill."¹

"Though a high rate of turnover exists in all organised industries in India, there are no reliable data available concerning the extent of the turnover."² According to the findings of Rege Committee, "the cotton textile industry in Bombay has a somewhat higher monthly turnover rate than in Madurai, Akola, Nagpur and Calcutta, for the probable reason that the number of mills in Bombay is far greater than anywhere else and it is possible for the workers to move from mill to mill . . . In the engineering group the rates are fairly high at Calcutta. The highest rates for any industry are those recorded for the glass industry, wherein labour has proved extremely mobile, owing to scarcity of trained men and the anxiety of employers to obtain such men at any cost from anywhere. In mining section, iron ore has a higher range of rates than gold, mainly because the former requires much less skill than the latter, and also because labour supply from the tribal sources in the iron

¹ R. K. Mukerjee, *Indian Working Class*, 1951, p. 42

² *The Bombay Textile Labour Enquiry Committee Report*, p. 362.

ore areas is much more plentiful than in gold mining. . . . In other industries like the printing presses, woollen textiles, cement, potteries, rice mills, etc., the rates do not on the whole appear to be excessive, except in particular localities.”¹

According to Dr. Mukerjee, “In cotton and jute mills, engineering works and other industrial establishments bribery and corruption are universally prevalent, and these increase the rates of turnover and absenteeism, to a greater extent than what is due to natural social circumstances of the workers. For each jobber an occasion for re-engagement is an opportunity for a fresh bribe. *Badlis* also swell his waiting list. The excessive turnover among the *badlis* in the different establishments in India is largely due to the fact that jobbers are pecuniarily interested in extending their circle of patronage so that the *badli* workers can obtain a few days’ employment in a month in the factory.”²

The measures to be adopted for reduction of labour turnover imply a positive policy requiring concerted action on the part of the employers. Besides, any measures conducive to the workers’ economic advancement and welfare, as well as measures intended to provide security of employment to workers are bound up to mitigate the evils of turnover, by reducing the anxiety of the worker to make frequent visits to the villages and to search for what is often the mirage of better employment and higher remuneration. In this connection the following remarks of the Bombay Textile Labour Enquiry Committee are worth noting³ :—

“Improvement in methods of recruitment is one of the principal remedies for excessive labour turnover. But more radical and effective methods such as establishment of employment exchanges, restriction of the powers of the jobber and organisation of a personnel department are required. Improvement of working conditions, adoption of an enlightened policy of management in respect of wages, transfers and promotions, leave and holidays, provision of facilities for education and training, promotion of welfare work, introduction of unemployment and sickness insurance, of gratuities and pensions, these will contribute to make the labour force more stable than it is at present. Not the least important factors contributing to stability will be the attitude of the employers to workers’ organisations and the provision of effective machinery for the ventilation and redress of grievances of the workers ”

¹ *Labour Investigation Committee Main Report*, p. 104.

² R. K. Mukerjee, *Op Cit.*, p. 40

³ *Report*, p. 363.

CHAPTER III

EMPLOYMENT EXCHANGES

A National Employment Service or Employment Exchange means the establishment of free public employment agencies with a view to help the adjacent of the supply of labour to the demand therefor. The duty of the service is to ensure the best possible organization of the employment market as an integral part of the national programme for full employment and development and use of the productive resources. Such service performs specially the following functions :—

- (1) It assists the workers in finding out suitable employment and the employers in finding suitable workers and to develop rules for registering job-seekers.
- (2) It promotes the mobility of labour necessary to meet employment market conditions. It brings employment seekers in close and effective touch with employers so that unnecessary waiting and time-lags are avoided.
- (3) It collects, analyses and makes available as much information as possible in employment conditions and trends.
- (5) It draws attention to the volume and nature of unemployed labour at any particular time so that the state can take suitable steps for its productive utilization.

These offices are set up by the Government for bringing together the workers who are in need of jobs and the employers who are looking for workers. Jobs seeking workers get themselves registered at these exchanges where the details of their qualifications, experience, etc., are recorded. Employers on their part inform the exchanges of the type of workers they want. When a vacancy is notified the exchange submits the names of the workers possessing the required qualifications for consideration, and interview, if necessary, is arranged between the parties. The final selection, of course, rests with the employers. Thus they are always in search of suitable employment for the workers and bring about an adjustment between demand and supply of labour and the right man to the right job is provided.

Employment exchanges were, for the first time established in our country in 1944. But in other countries of the world they were set up as far back as 1883 and the State-controlled exchanges were first set up in 1891 by New Zealand Government. At first these were private agencies which were either run on profit-making basis

by commercial concerns or on public utility lines by associations like Y. M. C. A.

In all countries, namely, Germany, France, U. S. A. etc., Employment Exchanges run privately were later on nationalised. In Russia Employment Office was set up in 1931 in the terms of Economic Plan. The use of Exchanges was made compulsory upon all the employers as against the voluntary systems of Great Britain and Germany. In Great Britain first Exchange was started in 1885 at Egham. They were giving free service but used to accept contribution from those who were placed in employment through it. But after 1902 this movement strengthened and at the end of 1939, there were 1620 offices in all under employment service organisation.

In 1919 at the Washington International Labour Conference, it was adopted that "each member which ratified this Convention shall establish a system of free public employment agencies under the control of a central authority .." India ratified this Convention in 1921. But the Royal Commission on Labour in 1931, suggested that in view of the industrial conditions of India Employment Exchanges could be of little use either in solving the unemployment problems, or in maintaining correct statistics of the unemployed. In the present position of Indian industry it is most unlikely that they would be in a position to offer an appreciable number of vacancies unless employers were compelled to recruit through them. Such compulsion is possible in special cases, such as shipping, but so far as industry in general is concerned they did not regard it as practicable under present conditions. They thought that it would be unwise to start them at a time when most factory owners can find sufficient labour at the gates.

In spite of these recommendations, Ahmedabad Millowners' Association prepared a scheme for the Labour Exchange in 1936, with the following objects :—

- (i) To adjust the supply and the demand of labour and right type of man may be available at the right time.
- (ii) To eliminate the evil of bribery.
- (iii) To make statistics of employment available which serves as an economic barometer indicating the ups and downs of industrial fluctuations.

In 1938 Cawnpore Labour Enquiry Committee also suggested for the establishment of Labour Exchanges on the same grounds. The Textile Labour Enquiry Committee, Bombay, also suggested for Employment Exchanges and also suggested that equal participation by representatives of employers and employees in the management of the Employment Exchanges is essential for their success.

In true sense the Employment Exchanges were started in India for the first time in 1945 under the Directorate General of Resettlement and Employment. First of all it took up the work of employment assistance to ex-servicemen and discharged war workers only, and for different purposes three Directorates were established: (1) Directorate of Employment Exchange (2) Directorate of Training, and (3) Directorate of Publicity. But soon the scope of the organisation was extended and it was converted into a regular employment exchange machinery with a view to meet the needs of all categories of persons in search of employment. By the year 1948-49 there were 54 Employment Exchanges, consisting of a Central Employment Exchange in New Delhi, 7 Regional Exchanges and 46 Sub-regional Exchanges. The Central Exchange at Delhi acts as an Inter-Provincial clearing house. Thereafter as a result of the Federal Financial Integration Scheme, the Directorate General of Resettlement and Employment took over control of the Employment Exchanges in Part B States on 1st April, 1950. This resulted in the addition of Employment Exchanges under the Directorate. By September 1950 there were 65 Employment Exchanges, 56 Employment District Offices, 15 Employment Information Bureaus and 33 Sub-offices functioning in the country. Regarding the work done by these exchanges, it can be mentioned that from October 1949 to September 1950, 1,108,654 persons got themselves registered out of which 289,931 were placed in employment. The number of employers using the Employment Exchanges were 6313.

The table on p. 46 shows the progress and the work done by the Employment Exchanges since 1951.¹

Exchanges gave priority to the Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, retrenched Government servants and displaced persons. During the year 1953, 28,040, Scheduled Caste, 3,203 Scheduled Tribes, 8,100 retrenched Government employees and 11,218 displaced persons got employment. In 1954, the Employment Exchanges opened a new section in order to find employment for surplus and retrenched class I, class II Gazetted and Commissioned Officers. Thirty Employment Exchanges operate mobile sections to help employment seekers in rural areas away from the Exchanges and in 1953 on an average 1959 persons found employment.

The table on page 47 gives the occupational distribution of Applicants on Line Registers.²

Apart from these there is one Central Training Institute also at Koni-Bilaspur in M.P. to train Instructors and supervisory staff. This is the only institute of its kind in Asia. The training is for six months. In 1953, the number of persons who had completed training at the institute was 198, bringing the total number of people trained to 1072.

¹ *Indian Year Book*, 1956, p. 340, *Indian Labour Gazette*, March 1957, p. 746.

² *Indian Labour Gazette*, March 1957, p. 747.

POSITION OF EMPLOYMENT EXCHANGES, 1951

Items	Years					
	1951	1952	1953	1954	1955	1956 Jan. 1957
No. of exchanges at the end of the period	126	131	126	128	136	143
No. of registrations during the period	1,375,351	1,476,699	1,408,800	1,465,497	1,584,024	1,669,895 135,225
No. placed in employment during the period	416,858	357,818	185,443	162,451	169,735	186,855 14,573
No. of applicants on the live register at the end of the period	328,719	437,571	522,360	609,780	691,958	758,503 777,154
Monthly No. of employers using the exchanges	6,364	6,023	4,320	4,526	4,881	5,431 5,295
No. of vacancies notified during the period	486,534	429,551	256,703	239,875	280,523	287,618 23,939
No. of vacancies dealt with at the end of the period	21,776	22,873	20,914	29,295	42,248	42,805 43,259

No. of Applicants seeking Employment in			1952 (average)	1953 (average)	1954 (average)	1955 (average)	1956 (Average)
1. Industrial Services	Supervisory		4,051	4,502	5,379	4,879	4,879
2. Skilled and services	Semi-skilled		43,873	47,340	52,118	54,147	58,908
3. Clerical Services	...		106,611	131,311	161,737	187,582	213,473
4. Educational Services	...		7,061	10,437	16,626	22,285	28,368
5. Domestic Services	...		12,876	15,760	19,613	21,750	25,566
6. Unskilled Services	...		184,498	233,807	269,987	320,402	380,089
7. Others	...	...	25,018	31,418	36,857	36,104	37,816
Total			383,991	477,575	562,307	647,109	749,099

Besides finding employment, the exchanges drew up a new scheme of technical and vocational training for adult civilians and the following table shows the number of training centres and the number of persons receiving training there in August each year during the period 1951-54:—

Month	No. of centres at the end of the period.	No. of persons undergoing Training at the end of the period				
		Techni- cal	Men Voca- tional	Appren- tice	Women Voca- tional	Total
August '51	203	7504	1786	833	374	10497
August '52	119	9097	1896	243	432	11786
August '53	270	7661	1633	626	465	10385
August '54	312	5954	1500	785	597	8836
Sep. '54	312	6219	1576	839	605	9239
July '55	230	9,393	29	432	—	9854
July '56	464	9,322	—	1,025	—	20347

In November 1952, the training and Employment Services Organisation Committee was set up under the chairmanship of Shri B. Shiva Rao, M.P., in order to assess the need for the continuance of the Resettlement and Employment Organisation in the context of the country's economic and social development and to suggest, with reference to such need, what its future shape should be in particular:—

- (a) To enquire into the whole question of the future of the Resettlement and Employment Organisation and examine whether part of the organisation should be transferred to the State Governments or not; in the latter event, what degree of superintendence and control should be retained by the Central Government.
- (b) To assess the results obtained by the Employment Exchanges and Training schemes, including the schemes for the training of instructors and supervisors at the Central Institute, Koni, Bilaspur;
- (c) To consider on what basis the Training schemes should be continued and whether the present system of granting stipends should be abolished or modified.
- (d) To examine whether there should be further expansion of Employment Exchanges and training programmes consonant with the increased requirements of the country;
- (e) To consider whether legislation should be introduced making it obligatory for industry to recruit personnel, at least in the larger industrial centres, through Employment Exchanges; and
- (f) To consider whether Government should make a small levy from the employers and for employment-seekers in order to finance part of the cost of the organisation.

The Committee recommended that :—

- (i) The employment exchange organisation should be developed into a full-fledged service, on a permanent footing and with enlarged powers;
- (ii) There should be decentralisation of administration. This means that although the policy may be laid down by the Central Government, the exchange may be run and administered by the State Government;
- (iii) The subsidy paid by the Central Government to the employment exchange should be continued but its amount should be restricted to 60% of the expenditure on the regional headquarters and employment exchange in the States subject to a maximum of the amount provided for in the budget for 1953-54 or the actual expenditure incurred during 1952-53, whichever may be of greater advantage to the State Government concern;
- (iv) The function of the employment exchange may be expanded by including (a) maintenance of "good relations with the employers and employees' groups; soliciting and taking

order (application for workers) and subsequently following them through until placement are effected. (b) Supervising and assisting registrants and conducting necessary test; (c) maintaining live files; renewals, revival, selecting and referring suitable applications to employers and maintaining placement records; (d) receiving orders and clearance and reference of such orders to the appropriate section for selection and approval, placing order in clearance and receiving application thereon; (e) Collecting information regarding employment opportunities and making such information available, with a view to assisting workers seeking employment and employers seeking workers." The exchanges are also to maintain and publish employment statistics and to forecast end of employment.

- (v) Vacancies for unskilled workers should not be formally registered nor should any formal submission be made against them. It should suffice if such vacancies are brought to the notice of employment seeker through announcements by other means. Thereafter the applicant should approach the employer direct. No statistics should be maintained of those who assemble at the exchange each day nor the number of vacancies involved in the announcements.
- (vi) The working and results of the recommendation regarding recruitment by Government and semi-Government employers through the exchanges should be watched for a time enforcing compulsion on the private sector also; and
- (vii) The employment service should develop standardised aptitude and trade tests to assess, wherever necessary, the aptitude and-or proficiency of applicant desiring training or employment in skilled trades and should undertake the task of standardising definition of skills and functions of the different types of tradesmen.

The Government had partly accepted the recommendation of B. Shiva Rao Committee and it has been decided to adopt the following measures in the second plan in order to make the Employment Exchanges more effective : (i) expansion of the employment service so as to ensure a wider coverage of employment centres through setting 125 additional employment exchanges; (ii) A scheme for collecting and disseminating employment market information; (iii) The establishment of Youth Employment Service at select exchanges and the provision of some employment counselling for adults including the issue of 'Career Pamphlets' and other appropriate literature; (iv) a programme of occupational research and

analysis with a view to standardising definitions and nomenclature; and (v) A programme of occupational testing at employment exchanges.

Conclusion. These exchanges which to-day are rendering so much assistance were not considered of much use by the Royal Commission on Labour simply on the grounds that when most factory owners can find sufficient labour at the gates, it would not be wise to start them. On the contrary the Labour Investigation Committee was of the opinion that even if Employment Exchanges do not increase employment they can at least remove the abuses of the present system of recruitment and for some employers the trouble and expenses of active recruiting..... Also if the functions are fully discharged they are bound to prove useful in galvanising the employment market.¹ The 31st session of the I. L. O. held in 1948 at San Francisco (U. S. A.) also adopted a convention in this respect which outlines the duties and functions of employment service organization and pleads for the co-operation of employers and workers in making it a success.

Among the various advantages of the Employment Exchanges, the most noteworthy are that the workers through them get the best suitable employment and the employers the best and most suitable men, the 'time lag' between occurring of vacancies and their filling up also becomes as short as possible. Evils of recruitment through jobbers and other intermediaries are removed and all the waste involved in a haphazard and unguided search for work can be avoided. It can serve not only as the source of the necessary information but also as the agency providing the necessary training for prospective employment.

Dr. R. K. Mukerjee has rightly said that "now that Employment Exchanges have passed through the initial stage, the organization should be put on a national basis through the Government of India passing an Employment Exchange Act for the establishment of an integrated network of Employment Exchanges throughout the country under the Ministry of Labour. Secondly, in certain scheduled industries and regions it should be made compulsory for employers to engage workers only through the Employment Exchanges and also for employment-seekers to register at the Employment Exchanges."² Thus properly conceived, a National Employment service can play an important role in training and directing manpower along proper channels, in eliminating the risks of both unemployment and underproduction and in working out programmes of social security and welfare in the country.

¹ *Main Report*, pp 82-83

² R. K. Mukerjee, *Indian Working Class*, pp. 47-48.

CHAPTER IV

AGRICULTURAL LABOUR

Their Strength and Growth

One of the most disquieting features of the rural economy of India is the growth in the number of the agricultural proletariat. In 1951, the agricultural labour population of India comprising owner cultivators, tenant cultivators, farm hands, field workers, agricultural serfs and unspecified class of workers, was about 249 million, as against 106 million souls in 1941, 93 million in 1931, and 102 in 1921.¹ If we consider only the wage-earning class, *i.e.*, the agricultural proletariat with no stake in land whatsoever, 27 million farm hands and field-workers, and 13 million agrestic serfs and unspecified workers together, will constitute the floating and landless working population in rural areas. Thus out of a total population of 106 million agricultural labourers, 62 per cent are actual cultivators and 25 depend upon wage labour as their principal source of livelihood.²

In the following table are shown changes in the relative proportion of agricultural workers during the last few decades and the percentage of the total number of agricultural labourers to the total number of workers engaged in all primary and secondary industries.³ :—

	1911	1921	1931 (In millions)	1941	1951 ⁴
Total number of agricultural workers (in millions)	91	102	93	106	100·0
Percentage to total workers in Primary Production	93·8	97·9	93·1	92·4	96·1
Percentage to total working Population in India	65·1	69·9	59·6	62·0	60·1
Percentage to total Indian Population	28·9	31·9	26·3	27·2	28·0
Percentage of Industrial Workers to Agricultural workers	19·7	15·6	16·2	16·0	15·4

¹ *Census Report for 1951*, Vol I, Pt. I-A, p. 92.

² *Op. Cit.*, p. 93.

³ Lorenzo, *Indian Labour in Primary Industries*, (1948), p 16

⁴ 1951 figures calculated by me.

It is noteworthy that the number of agricultural proletariat has increased steadily during past years. In 1882, the Census Report recorded 7.5 million "landless day labourers" in agriculture. This number increased from 18.7 million in 1891 to 21.6 million in 1921, and over 33 million in 1931. The number of labourers per 1,000 cultivators rose from 254 to 417 in the same period. In the Indian Union, according to the census of 1951, the number of agricultural labourers is 44.8 million. According to the Census Commissioner for India, 64.4 per cent of the agricultural population are owner-cultivators, 12.3 per cent are tenant-cultivators, 21 per cent agricultural labourers and 2.3 per cent are rent receivers. There can be no doubt that the number continues to increase as has been noted in various enquiries.

The growth of this class may be accounted for by the increase of absentee landlords, by the transfer of land from the hands of cultivators into the hands of their creditors, by the displacement of village crafts and industries due to the spread and use of machine-made products, by the gradual transformation of the old village economy resting on custom and payment in kind into a price economy based on contract. Every circumstance which has weakened the position of the small holder, as Dr. Mukerjee observes, has increased the supply of agricultural labourers, *viz.*, "the loss of common rights in the rural economy, the disuse of collective enterprise, the sub-division of holdings, the multiplication of rent receivers, free mortgaging and transfer of land, and the decline of cottage industries."¹ At another place Dr. Mukerjee explains that one of the factors, that has contributed to the growth of an increasing class of landless labourers; is the economic transition through which some of the criminal tribes and castes of India have been passing. Many of them sought refuge in jungles and foothills. In most tribal areas the original tribal system was one of a village headman and ryotwari tenure. Under the land revenue policy of the British Government, a limited number of persons were given proprietary rights. These rights were gradually lost as moneylenders and traders exploited the ignorance and improvidence of these primitive people. Most of them were converted from tenants into landless labourers. This has happened to the Gonds and Bhils in M. P., the Korwas in the U. P. and the Mundas in Chhota Nagpur.²

Regional Distribution

These figures also reveal the same tendency of increasing landless labourers in the country. According to this statement there are 402 landless agriculturists for every 1,000 agricultural landholders. There are enormous differences in this respect from State to State. This number is smallest in U. P. 161, and largest in Travancore-Cochin, 782. The number for other major States, arranged

¹ R. K. Mukerjee, *Land Problems of India*, p. 215.

² R. K. Mukerjee, *Economic Problems of Modern India*, Vol. I, p. 42.

in order, are as follows: Mysore, 190; Assam, 235; Orissa 271; Bombay 383; Madhya Bharat 397; Madhya Pradesh 413; Hyderabad 507; Bihar 510; Rajasthan 544; West Bengal 609 and Madras 714.¹

The following table indicates the growth of the agricultural proletariat² :—

			1911 ¹ (In 000's)	1921	1931
Landlords	...	...	2,845	3,727	3,257
Cultivators	...	...	71,096	74,665	61,180
Agricultural Labourers	...	...	25,879	21,676	31,480
Others (market gardeners, cattle raisers, foresters.)			5,196	4,638	6,536

In the decade 1921-31, the proportion of agricultural labourers to cultivators increased at a rapid rate as indicated by the following table³ :—

Principal Occupations				
Workers— farm servants plus field labourers	Ordinary cultivators	Agricultural Labourers	Actual workers, Cultivating owners plus tenant culti- vators.	
	1921		1931	
Total figures ...	21,676,107	74,664,886	24,925,357	61,180,004
Ratio ...	291	1,000	407	1,000

In spite of the change in classification adopted in 1931 census, which gives us an apparent decline in the agricultural population, these figures reveal the tendency to an increasing landless population. For 1941 the figures are as follows :—

Workers— farm servants plus field labourers	Ordinary Cultivators	Agricultural Labourers	Actual workers, Cultivating owners plus tenant culti- vators	
	1941		1951	
Total figures ...	27,000,000	65,000,000	44,811,928	204,310,521
Ratio ..	415	1,000	402	1,000

According to 1951 census, out of a total rural population of 295 million, 249 million were engaged in agriculture and, of these about

¹ *Statistical Abstract of British India*, 1915 onward, and *Abstract of Tables*, 1911

Census

² *Census Report*, 1931, Vol I, Pt 1, p 283

³ *Census of India*, 1951, Vol I, Pt. I-A.

20% were returned as cultivating labourers and their dependents. Cultivating labourers represented a total population of about 49 million. More recently the results of the Agricultural Labour Enquiry Committee show that in India as a whole there are 17.6 million agricultural labour families, spread over a little more than half a million villages. The agricultural labourers thus form the largest group of labourers in our country—there being only 3 million persons employed in the factories. Of the total number of agricultural labour families, 1.5 million are in North India; 5.0 million in East India; 6.1 million in South India; 1.1 million in West India; 3.2 million in Central India and 0.5 million in North-West India. Agricultural labourers form about 30.4 per cent of the total number of rural families and 22.7% of the total number of both rural and urban families. The following table (p. 55) shows the total number of rural and agricultural labour families in different Census Zones and States.¹

It will be seen from this statement that in some States agricultural workers represent a serious problem, notably, in Bihar, Orissa, Madras, Mysore, Travancore-Cochin, Hyderabad, M. B. and M. P. Half of the agricultural labourer families are without land, and the rest are in possession of some land. The percentage of agricultural labour families without land varies from 8.6 in North India to 13.7 in East India; 22.8 in South India; 11.6 in West India; 22.1 in Central India and 7.6 in N.-Western India.

Type of Agricultural Labourers

Agricultural Labourers Enquiry Committee defines an agricultural labourer as a person who for more than half of the total number of days on which he actually works during the year is engaged in agricultural operations as a hired labourer.² Whereas an agricultural labour family is defined as "one in which either the head of the family or 50 per cent or more of the earners report agricultural labour as their main occupation."³ The Congress Agrarian Reforms Committee classifies agricultural labourers into three groups, viz., (i) field labourers; (ii) ordinary labourers; and (iii) skilled labourers. (i) The field workers include ploughmen, reapers, sowers, weeders and transplanters. Majority of these are engaged in seasonal type of work, but some amongst these are employed all the year round. (ii) Ordinary labourers are employed in building embankments, digging, silt clearing and other like jobs. (iii) The skilled labourers include carpenters, masons, blacksmiths, and others who are employed by cultivators on the same rates as agricultural labourers. In these cases of labourers there is a substantial number of women and children—though among higher caste agricultural labourers

¹ Quoted by H. D. Malviya in *Village Panchayats in India*, 1956.

² *Agricultural Wages in India*, Vol. I, 1952, p. 1.

³ *Rural Man-Power and Occupational Structure*, 1954, p. 449.

Census Zones and States	Total Rural Population	Total No. of Rural Families (millions)	Total No. of Agricultural Labourer families (millions)	% of Agricultural Labour families to Rural families	Average Size of Agricultural Labour family
North India					
1. U. P. ...	54.6	11,056	1,563	14.14	4.2
East India	80.1	15,418	5,020	32.56	4.3
1. Assam ...	8.6	1,625	177	10.89	3.7
2. Bihar ...	37.6	6,694	2,661	39.75	4.5
3. Orissa ...	14.1	2,856	1,228	43.00	4.3
4. W. Bengal ...	18.7	4,000	932	23.30	3.9
South India	60.7	12,283	6,177	50.29	4.2
1. Madras ...	45.8	9,481	5,115	53.95	4.2
2. Mysore ...	6.9	1,286	540	41.99	4.3
3. Travancore-Cochin.	7.8	1,466	516	35.20	4.8
West India	28.0	5,179	1,104	21.32	4.3
1. Bombay ...	24.8	4,574	982	21.47	4.2
2. Saurashtra ...	2.7	494	89	20.04	4.5
Central India	44.1	8,237	3,285	36.55	4.6
1. M. P. ...	18.4	3,848	1,496	38.88	4.5
2. M. B. ...	6.5	1,234	280	22.69	4.8
3. Hyderabad ...	15.2	3,101	1,308	42.18	4.7
North West India	31.1	5,053	510	10.09	4.7
1. Rajasthan ...	12.7	2,110	202	9.57	4.4
2. Punjab ...	10.2	1,809	183	10.12	5.0
3. PEPSU ...	2.8	531	70	13.18	5.2
4. Jammu & Kashmir	3.7	249	19	7.63	4.5
Total India ...	295.0	57,976	17,659	30.46	4.3

they form a small portion, but in lower castes, their number is considerable. Taking all the occupations together there are 465 females per 1,000 male workers. For certain agricultural operations—like weeding, sowing, grinding and transplanting—women are usually employed not because of their comparatively greater efficiency but because of lower wages they demand. Child labour is also common in such agricultural operations as weeding, husking, spreading manure, watching crops and carting. The age of such children ranges between 10 and 15 years and they are found to labour from 6 in the morning to late in the evening.¹

¹ *Agrarian Reforms Committee Report*, pp 114-15.

Agricultural Labour Enquiry Committee in their report distinguish between the "attached" workers and the casual workers. The former are those who are employed by the big *landlords* and whose employment is more or less continuous, and who are under some sort of contract with the employers during the period of employment. While the latter are "workers other than attached. They are employed from time to time according to exigencies of work."¹ The "attached" workers are employed for a period of time by the assignment of lodging on the farm, the mode of payment being determined by custom and tradition. They have to work for their masters and are not ordinarily free to seek employment elsewhere.² While the "casual" workers are paid at the market rate they are free to leave one job for another.³ The following table shows the relative proportion of "attached" and "casual" workers in some of the States⁴.—

States	Percentage Casual to total number of workers	Percentage of attached workers
West Bengal	94.3	5.7
Assam	93.8	6.2
Bombay	85.7	14.3
Madras	92.4	7.6
Punjab	76.5	23.5
Travancore-Cochin	99.9	0.1
Hyderabad	87.2	12.8
PEPSU	26.1	73.8
Kutch	100.0	—
Coorg	95.3	4.7
Bilaspur	60.0	40.0

It will be observed that in contrast with Madras, very high percentage of 'attached' labourers are met with in the Punjab, PEPSU and Bilaspur, who receive as their principal income a share of the crop in kind. They are known as the *Sanjhis*.

In most cases the difference between "casual" and "attached" workers is stated initially in terms of period for which a man is engaged and whether or not he receives daily wages, *e. g.* in Assam, "attached" workers "were employed and paid on a monthly, half yearly or annual basis", while "casual" workers were employed

¹ *Report on the Intensive Survey of Agricultural Labourer*, Vol. I, 1955, p. 21.

² They are known as *Padyals*, *Pannayals*, *Pulayals*, *Paleru*, *Jita* in South India.

³ *Agricultural Wages in India*, Vol I, p. 400.

⁴ *Agricultural Labour Enquiry Committee Report*, Vol. I, p. 31.

on daily wages for short periods during busy seasons.¹ In Madras "attached" workers "were engaged for the whole year or during the busy season for a period of three to six months"; casual workers being "engaged either on time or on piece rates."² In PEPSU "casual workers were paid on a daily basis while attached workers were generally employed for longer periods on yearly, half-yearly or monthly agreements."³ In the case of Bihar, on the other hand, "a striking feature of agricultural employment . . . was the payment of daily wages both to casual and attached workers."⁴ Similarly in Rayalaseema area "some of the attached workers got daily wages even though the contract of employment was annual."⁵

Agricultural Serfs

At the bottom of the agricultural ladder in India are those labourers whose conditions are not very different from those of serfs. Agricultural serfdom is most prevalent in those parts of India where the lower and depressed classes are most numerous. In fact, the ethnic composition of the village, which governs the social stratification, is responsible for the survival of the slavish conditions. Thus in Bombay, Madras, Malabar, Cochin, M. P., Central India and Chhota Nagpur, we have a large aboriginal population, and the condition of the agricultural labourer is very much like that of a slave. An official report describes serf labour in the following terms: "The average agricultural labourer is not infrequently compelled in times of stress to mortgage his personal liberty. In return for a small sum of money which he may happen to need at the moment, he agrees to serve the man from whom he has borrowed. The money is not repaid, nor is it intended to be repaid, but the borrower remains a lifelong bond-slave of his creditor. For his work he merely receives an inadequate dole of food and to all intents and purposes is in the position of a medieval serf."⁶ This agrarian serf labour is regularised in such a manner that some of the regions have special name for it, e.g., *Hali* in Gujarat, *Kaimuri* in South Bihar, *Janouri* in North Bihar, *Gothi* in Orissa, *Pannialathiram* in Tamilnad, *Gassigullu* in Andhra, *Bhagia* in Hyderabad, *Sanwak* and *Hariyas* in Oudh, *Harwah* in Central India States, *Jeethan* in Karnatak and *Barsalia* and *Shalkari* in the M. P., *Haliyas* and *Chyoras* of Kumaon, *Chakar* in Orissa, *Padials* in east Madras, *Dublas* and *Kolis* in Bombay.⁷ These serfs serve in their masters' households.

¹ *Agricultural Wages in India*, Vol. I, p. 55

² *Ibid.*, p. 114

³ *Ibid.*, p. 247.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 63

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 120.

Cf. for Punjab, U P. and West Bengal, p. 151, 165 and 182

⁶ Quoted by Dinker Desai, *Agrarian Serfdom in Indian-Sociologist*, July, 1942.

⁷ For a detailed nomenclature of such workers refer to *Agricultural Labour Enquiry Committee Report*, Vol. I, p. 32.

They may have received money for their marriage expenses giving an undertaking to serve till they pay off their debt. They are fed and clothed by their masters. On the East Coast of Madras similarly, many of the agricultural labourers are *Bariahs* who are known as *Padials*. The *Padial* is a serf who has fallen on hereditary dependence on a landowner from whom he has borrowed money. The money may have been borrowed either for his own marriage or for that of his son or daughter. The borrower undertook to work for the lender until the debt was repaid. Such loans, however, are never repaid and the *Padials* themselves being attached to the soil, go with the land when it is sold or the owner dies. In Madras, the *Padial's* wages are paid in kind equivalent to Rs. 3 per month in terms of money.

In Orissa, there are three kinds of labourers: (1) The *Ohakar* or *Baramasiya* labourer engaged for 12 months with board and lodging and Rs. 24 in cash. His ancestor may have obtained a loan from his employer. (2) The *Naga Muliya*, who also works as a yearly servant, but receives instead of board and lodging 4 seers of paddy and a plot of land to cultivate free of rent. (3) The *Danda Muliya*, who is employed for a short period on specified wages. In Bihar, there are the *Kamias* or bond-servants who having borrowed money, bind themselves to perform whatever menial services are required of them by their masters. These depressed castes who have no land or security pledge their labour, whenever they want a loan; and not only their labour but that of their dependents also. Very often it happens that the joint wages of the *Kamia* and his wife are not sufficient to feed them and their children.

In South Gujerat *Halis* serve their creditors from year to year being unable to pay the loan during their lifetime. The *hali* has been called an indentured labourer, a freeman *de jure* but a serf *de facto*.¹ The region of the Tapti river has about a lakh of serfs. They go on drudging from year to year and effect an escape from the drudgery either by death or by running away to a distant place from their village.²

Forced Labour

Conditions of forced labour seem to prevail all over the country. Writing about the aboriginal population of the Thana District one officer reports, "All jungle tract tenants who cultivate by 'Khad', (*i.e.* those who pay fixed rent in kind, and not a crop share) are liable to be called upon to work for their landlords... If they refuse or procrastinate they are liable to assaults or beatings... I was told on credible authority of men being tied up to posts and whipped. Such occurrences I can vouch for. There are also rumours of men in the

¹ *Bombay Census Report*, 1921, Pt I, p 20

² J. B. Shukla, *Life and Labour in Gujerat Taluka*, p 118

past having been killed." This system of exacting forced labour from cultivating tenants exists in almost all the States. Dr. Lorenzo describes various forms of *begar* prevailing in North India. They are (i) *Beth Begar* under which labourers are forced to perform agricultural operations for 2 to 5 days, e.g., ploughing (Hal Beth), weeding and watering (Kodal Beth), harvesting the crop (Dhan Beth) or threshing the crop (Miseni Beth). (ii) *Chakran Begar* under which labourers living on landlords' land have to work for 2 or 3 days in lieu of the rent. (iii) *Perjanta Begar* under which in time of emergency the labourers have to render 3 to 12 days' labour to the landlords.

The Agricultural Labour Enquiry Committee calls 'begar' as "involuntary labour." It observes that it is a characteristic feature of our agricultural economy. It prevails generally among the attached workers. With a view to making the attached workers they remain in service for a long time, it is usual for landholders to advance loans or allot plots of land free of interest or rent. e. g., in U. P. the workers usually remain attached to the same employers for successive years, the "reason being that employers generally advance loans ranging from Rs. 200 to 400 per annum to the attached workers and also gave them a plot of land (generally 2 bighas) either on a nominal basis or free rent."¹ In Bihar, "an attached worker was usually advanced a sum of Rs. 50 to Rs. 100 at the beginning of the year and unless and until he returned the sum, he was not permitted to leave his employer."² The inability of workers to repay the advances has led to certain practices of exacting labour either at nominal wages or without them. Thus a type of indentured labour prevails in certain States.³

Apart from *begar* or *both* (forced labour), there is a system of levying *abwabs* or illegal exactions which survives in Bengal and Bihar. It has reduced the cultivators to semi-serfdom. Sometimes these exactions take the form of the marriage fees, sometimes they are taxed for carrying on certain trades. These exactions deprive the peasantry of a large portion of their already meagre income. The *abwab* is employed not only as an engine of financial extortion but of physical oppression. "In *Rajshahi*," according to a Settlement Report, "landlords wield a sort of sovereign power dispensing justice and imposing taxes." According to another report, "In some of the remoter parts of Pabna, the zamindars' agents still assume summary but unauthorised magisterial functions, fining and, at times, imprisoning those whom they convict." Added to all this is the process of gradual expropriation of the cultivators by money-lenders driving the aborigines into the ranks of servile tenants

¹ *Agricultural Wages in India*, Vol. I., p 68.

² *Ibid.*, p 166.

³ *Agricultural Labour Enquiry Committee Report*, Vol. I., p. 45.

liable to forced labour and to the payment of illegal exactions. Agrarian serfdom thus lingers on in India—a relic of the Middle Ages which might be regarded as one of the darkest blemishes in the economic life of present-day India.

Demand for Rural Labour

The demand for labour in agriculture is highly seasonal. There is a peak demand for labour in the harvesting seasons and next to that in times of transplanting and weeding most of which are done by women. Men are required mainly for the operations of ploughing, levelling, digging trenches, forming beds and bunds, hoeing and irrigating all of which require strenuous physical labour. Generally speaking for crops grown on dry (rain-fed) lands, or on wet lands (canal-irrigated) more women are required than men. It is only on 'Garden lands' with wells from which water is lifted by bullock power that more men are required than women.

The labour hired in fields depends upon the size of holding and the nature of cultivation or crops raised, *e. g.*, in the Kanam tract of the Baroda district for a farmer with a holding of 25 bighas producing cotton, guar, tur and a few other pulses and with members of the family including the farmer, to work in the fields there was no necessity to employ hired labour. But on another holding of almost equal size in Surat made of 2 bighas of irrigated land raising vegetables, $5\frac{1}{2}$ bighas of paddy land and 17 bighas of grassland and with 9 members of the family including the owner to help in cultivation paid labour came to about 10% of the total requirement. The period of employment in the year varies from 5 to 7 months in the regions raising dry crops to as high as 9 to 10 months for irrigated crops.

Generally the members of the families of the farmers supply most of agricultural labour needed on the fields. Labour is hired only occasionally during busy seasons and the percentage of such labour ranges from 10 to 20 per cent of the total labour required during the year. Instances are common in which although higher labour may be necessary during certain important field operations, poor farmers cannot employ outside labour for want of resources to pay wages with the result that crops suffer damage and the yield to the farmer from lands comparatively becomes low. Besides, under a peculiar system (most prevalent in the Bhil tracts of the Bombay presidency and the Mewar State) friends and relatives mutually help each other on the fields. The friend or relation so helping gets $\frac{1}{2}$ lb. of boiled maize every day at noon and takes his or her morning and evening food at home.

Supply of Rural Labour

The ample supply of rural labour and the multiplication in the number of landless labourers have brought about agrarian unsettlement in India. They hang about the countryside and add

to the already existing inefficiency of agriculture. They are an obstacle to the introduction of improved methods of cultivation. Speaking at the Agricultural Labourers' Conference in 1940, Dr. Pattabhi Sitaramayya said, "A series of intermediaries has come into being between the Government and the ultimate cultivator who spends the day between slush and mud, who works now with a starving stomach and now with a half-appeased appetite, who knows no rest in storm or sunshine, who oftentimes has no dwelling site which can be called his own. He grows our paddy but starves. He feeds our milch cows but never knows anything beyond kanjee and water, he fills our granaries but has to beg each day rations for the rest of the year. He digs our wells but must keep off from them when they are full. He is a perpetual hewer of wood and drawer of water for those who fatten on his labour and rise to wealth and plenty. His condition is appalling and heart-rending."

The State and the public have done almost nothing to alleviate the economic position of the mainstay of rural parts. The administrators, politicians and the economists have not done anything in spite of their schemes of improvement of agriculture and rural development. The labour is no doubt plentiful but it gets seasonal work and it is without work half the year round. The rural labour supply is so great that it can cultivate land on any term even beyond the cultivators' paying capacity.

Recruitment of labour in all agricultural operations and rural Indian pursuits has a direct and complementary relationship with caste groups. In many cases not only does caste determine the nature of occupation, but different occupations give birth to various subcastes hitherto unknown.

The outstanding features of labour supply in agriculture are summarised below :—

1. Owner cultivators and high class tenants generally belong to high castes whose hereditary occupation has been cultivation. *e. g.*, Brahmins, Rajputs, Thakurs, Kayasthas, Tagas, Syeds and Pathans.

2. Farm hands are recruited both from high and low castes. Usually they belong to the caste of the employer. The majority of this class considers agriculture as its principal, though not hereditary occupation, *e. g.*, Kunbis, Vaishyas, Gujars, Ahirs, Jats, Sheikhs and Pathans.

3. Field workers are recruited mostly from lower castes which have agriculture as their subsidiary occupation, *e. g.*, Julahas, Lodhs, Chamars, Kumhars, Telis, Khatiks and Koris.

4. Landless floating hands are recruited from the lowest rung of the social ladder. They are recruited mainly from Doms, Dusadhs, Bhuiyas, Pahariyas, Dhimaïs, Ghatwars, Kols and Koris.

INCOME OF AGRICULTURAL LABOURERS

Census Zones and Major States	Income	
	Total Annual income per family (Rs.)	Per Capita Income (Rs.)
All India	447	104
North India	551	131
East India	506	118
1. Assam	610	162
2. Bihar	534	119
3. Orissa	340	79
4. West Bengal	622	159
South India	382	91
1. Madras	365	87
2. Mysore	396	92
3. Travancore-Cochin	541	113
West India	391	91
1. Bombay	368	88
2. Saurashtra	579	129
Central India	417	51
1. Madhya Pradesh	390	87
2. Madhya Bharat	399	83
3. Hyderabad	455	97
North West India	651	139
1. Rajasthan	604	137
2. Punjab	607	121
3. PEPSU	913	176

The annual per capita income of an Indian agricultural labourer works out as Rs. 104, as against per capita income of Rs. 264 the entire Indian population. It is as low as Rs. 79 in Orissa, Rs. 83 in M.B., Rs. 87 in Madras and M.P. and Rs. 88 in Bombay. In 1950-51, all the agricultural labour families in India (which formed 22.7% of the total number of Indian families), got only 8.3% of the net national income.

Agricultural labourers as a class are extremely poor not only in comparison with the rest of the community taken as a whole but even in comparison with other class of labour. Shri A. C. Guha, while introducing the State Bank Bill in the Lok Sabha on April 23, 1955, told the House: "In West Bengal the income of agricultural labourer is Rs. 160 per year while the income of the industrial labour is Rs. 268, which means the agricultural labourer gets only 59% of what the industrial labourer gets. In Bihar, it is Rs. 119 for agricultural labourer and Rs. 332 for industrial labourer, the percentage being 36. The corresponding figures for Orissa are Rs. 79 and Rs. 145, the percentage being 54; for Punjab Rs. 121 and

Rs. 261, the percentage being 56; for Bombay it is Rs. 88 only for agricultural labourer and Rs. 368 for industrial labourer the percentage being 24."

The Intensive Family Survey found the average size of an agricultural labour family to be 4.7—consisting of 2.0 earners; 0.7 helpers and 2.0 dependents—as compared to the size of the owner family 5.45 and of tenant family 5.39. Amongst the agricultural labour families, the landless have only 4.1 persons per family. The per capita family annual income of agricultural labourers derived from different sources is given below :—

States	Cultivation of land	Agricultural Labourer	Non-Agricultural Labourer	Occupations other than farming	Others	Total
U. P.	62	380	56	41	12	551
Assam	45	417	98	32	9	601
Bihar	57	342	65	60	10	531
Orissa	59	190	66	16	9	340
W. Bengal	45	404	102	61	10	622
Madras	76	226	31	22	10	365
Mysore	87	202	49	53	5	396
Travancore-Cochin	30	384	77	45	5	541
Bombay	27	270	39	26	6	368
M. B.	48	214	64	47	26	399
M. P.	45	289	40	10	6	390
Hyderabad	67	272	48	52	16	455
Rajasthan	167	306	51	70	10	604
Punjab	24	352	94	56	81	607
PEPSU	7	658	63	53	126	913
All India	60	287	53	36	11	447

The Family Budgets

The fact of the extreme poverty of the Indian agricultural labour is corroborated by the standard of living of the average agricultural labour family as indicated by the pattern of its expenditure.

According to the findings of the All India Agricultural Labour Enquiry Committee, the annual income per agricultural labour family was Rs. 447 and the average annual expenditure Rs. 468 (including Rs. 7 incurred on ceremonies). There was thus a deficit of Rs. 21. An idea of the poor level of living can be had from the

fact that out of Rs. 461 spent on recurring items of expenditure, as much as Rs. 393 or 85.3% was spent on food and Rs. 29 or 6.3% on clothing. The average annual expenditure on the rest of his necessities *viz.* shelter, fuel, and lighting and miscellaneous items like tobacco liquor, washing soap and medicine, etc., came to only Rs. 39 or 8.4% of the total expenditure. At least 79.2% of their total expenditure on food are for cereals. Only 5% of their food budget is accounted for gur, sugar, vegetables, fish, meat, eggs, etc. The following statement gives the actual and percentage expenditure on consumption groups for the different zones and for India as a whole¹:—

The most striking feature of the budgets of agricultural labourers is the high percentage of expenditure on food alone, being 85.3 per cent. as against 39 % for U. S. A. ; 55 for Russia and 56 for Holland²—which is an index of the low standard of living of the labourers.

Another important feature of these budgets is that in the majority of cases, the percentage of expenditure on physiological and basic requirements (food, clothing, rent, etc.) is the highest whereas the percentage of expenditure on non-physiological and secondary requirements (*i.e.* social and religious recreations, education of children, etc.) is almost negligible. Moreover, the percentage of expenditure on non-physiological and secondary requirements is higher in the case of urban industrial workers than in the case of agricultural workers in rural areas, which again is a sure index of the low standard of living of the agricultural labourers when compared with their confreres in their urban areas³:

	Per cent of expenditure Physiological and Basic Requirements	Non-Physiological and Secondary Requirements
Average Agricultural Labourer (Rural)	88.9	11.1
Average Industrial Labourer (Urban)	73.8	26.2

The food taken by the labourers is far from satisfactory. Many do not get the required quantity nor get the requisite quality. It is said that if epidemics slay thousands every year malnutrition kills millions. Their diet usually consists of inferior cereals like jowar, bajri and millets with some pulses. Green vegetables are

¹ B. Ramamurti, *Agricultural Labour—How They Work and Live*, 1954, p 31, 45.

² Strokin, Zimmerman, *Systematic Source Book in Rural Sociology*, Vol III, p 371.

³ Lorenzo, *Agricultural Labour Conditions in Northern India*, p 120

taken only on festive occasions. Ghee and milk are rarely included in the diet. They take their daily diet at about 12 a.m. in the noon and the meal in the evening after returning from the field. Often millet or barley bread and chillies and some salt are taken. The labourers as a class are more addicted to drink than others. They drink country liquor made of rotten barley and mahua seed. Whether the liquor injures health or not the addicts are economically at a low level. Whatever they earn they spend away, more at the *Kalal's* shop than for the household. This results in deterioration in their financial status and their children and womenfolk suffer privation.

The proportion of basic foods to energizing foods consumed by various classes of agricultural labourers in some provinces of Northern India is as follows¹:

1. Food Budget of well-to-do cultivators showing the percentage of basic to energizing foods:—

Province	Total of food consumed oz.	Basic foods oz.	Percentage to the total	Energizing food oz.	Percentage to the total
Punjab	58	31	53.4	27	46.6
U. P.	42	20	47.6	22	52.4
Bengal	36	19	52.8	17	47.2

2. Food Budget of landless agricultural labourers and field workers showing the percentage of Basic to Energizing Foods.

Province	Total amt. of food consumed oz.	Basic foods oz.	Percentage to the total	Energizing foods oz.	Percentage to the total
Punjab	49	40	81.6	9	18.4
U. P.	33	29	87.9	4	21.1
Bengal	28	22	77.8	6	21.4

3. Food Budget of Agrestic serfs showing the percentage of Basic to Energizing Foods.

Consumers	Total Amt. of food consumed	Basic foods	Percentage to the total	Energizing foods	Percentage to the total
Sewaks (Oudh)	21	21	100	...	...
Kamias (Bihar)	22	20	90.9	2	9.1

¹ Lorenzo, *Op. Cit.*, p 125-26.

Agricultural labour forms an integral part of the rural population and as such their economic conditions are intimately linked up with those of other rural families. In the following table, a comparison has been made of the agricultural labour families with that of all rural families in respect of the level and content of their living¹ :—

ANNUAL PER CAPITA EXPENDITURE (%)

Consumption Group	Agricultural Labour families		Rural families N. S. S.
	(A. L. E.)	(1950-51)	(1949-50)
I—Food	...	85.3	71.4
Food-grains	..	4.0	41.7
Pulses	...	1.0	3.9
Vegetables	...	2.3	2.5
Edible oil	...	0.7	4.1
Milk and Milk Product	...	1.4	8.4
Meat, fish and Eggs	...	1.1	2.3
II—Fuel and Lighting	...	0.8	3.5
III—House-Rent	...	6.3	0.6
IV—Clothing and Foot-wear	...	6.5	13.4
V—Services and Miscellaneous	...	6.5	11.1
Tobacco	...	2.3	1.9
Intoxicants	...	0.7	0.8
Total Expenditure	-	100.0	100.0

Judged by the per capita expenditure of Rs. 107 of agricultural labour families as against Rs. 204 of all rural families, the level of living of agricultural labour families is deplorably poor.

The labourer and his family fall easy prey to several diseases due to malnutrition and unhealthy conditions of living as they are usually under-fed, ill-housed and ill-clothed. Between hook-worm and malaria at least 20% of the working days may be lost by the labourers. The Agricultural Labour Enquiry Committee attributed the poverty of the agricultural labour families to the following causes :—

- (i) Inability of the agricultural industry to provide adequate employment to agricultural labour families;
- (ii) Lack of opportunities for self or non-agricultural employment;
- (iii) Low wages paid for earned work.

¹ B. Ramamurti, *Op. Cit.*, p. 41.

EMPLOYMENT, UNEMPLOYMENT AND UNDER-EMPLOYMENT OF AGRICULTURAL LABOURERS

The number of days of employment on wages of agricultural labourers in different zones are as follows.—

Zones and States	Men			Women		
	Agricultural Labour	Non-Agricultural Labour	Total	Agricultural Labour	Non-Agricultural Labour	Total
North India						
U. P. ...	255	34	289	119	24	143
East India ...	182	42	224	99	24	123
Bihar ...	167	33	200	91	20	111
Orissa ...	199	57	256	113	37	150
West Bengal	200	46	246	152	36	188
Assam ...	208	48	256	136	19	155
South India	160	21	181	132	7	139
Madras ...	159	19	178	134	6	140
Mysore ...	130	24	154	120	10	130
Travancore-Cochin	185	30	215	133	14	147
Central India	221	24	245	125	16	141
M. P. ...	239	16	255	112	14	122
M. B. ...	173	48	221	108	28	131
Hyderabad	212	23	235	141	18	199
West India ...	176	20	196	103	13	116
Bombay ...	173	20	193	102	11	113
North West India	177	25	202	98	17	115
Rajasthan ...	162	22	184	113	12	125
Punjab ...	164	24	188	35	29	64
PEPSU ...	273	8	281	50	1	51
All-India ...	189	29	218	120	14	134

On an average, an adult male was engaged in agricultural labour for 189 days, in paid non-agricultural labour for 29 days and was self-employed for 49 days, while he found no work for 98 days or about 27% of the total number of days in the year. Here again, the position varied from state to state, the agricultural labourers in North India being employed for 50 days in the year and in West India for 123 days, in East India for 92 days; in South India for 113 days, in Central India for 75 days and in North-West India 99 days.

State-wise, the position was worse in Madras (119 unemployed days), Bombay (118 days), Punjab (118 days), Travancore-Cochin

(115 days), and Bihar (107 days), while it was relatively better in the States of PEPSU (59 unemployed days), Orissa, (58 days), and U. P. (50 days) with other States following in between these extremes.

The position is even worse so far as the women labourers are concerned. Taking India as a whole, the women agricultural labourers could get, as an average, hired employment on 120 days in agricultural and 14 days in non-agricultural labour. In West Bengal a woman labourer worked for wages on 188 days in the year, in Punjab she worked only for 64 days and in PEPSU for 51 days. Employment opportunities of women labour has tended to decrease in so far as house industries, like hand pounding of rice or hand-spinning have been supplemented by large-scale factories, for rice-milling, spinning, etc. To that extent the income for the family as a whole has been adversely affected.

Another significant fact brought about by the A. L. E. Committee is that 79% of the agricultural labourers in India could get no other work than paid employment on land and only 21% had any subsidiary occupation. The percentage of agricultural labourers having subsidiary occupation varied from 30% in East India and West India to 16% in Central India. The main reason for not finding the subsidiary occupations is lack of finance with which the agricultural labourers could provide themselves with means of self-employment.

Hours of Work

Hours of work vary from place to place, season to season and from crop to crop. Practically all the work has to be done in sunlight. Invariably the early cool hour of the morning and occasionally the moonlight nights are utilised for the arduous work of lifting water by the bullock mote or the persian wheel. Cattle threshing is taken up in the early hours of the morning. Animals have to be fed before milking or taking out for work early in the morning. In Bengal the hours of work for field labourers are from 6 a.m. to 1.30 p.m. and again from 3.30 p.m. to 6 p.m. In Madras field labourers are sometimes required to work with two intervals from 4.30 a.m. to 6 p.m. but the regular hours of labour are from 6 a.m. to 6 p.m. In Bombay men are engaged for one-year work from 7 a.m. to 6 p.m.. In U. P., the hours are from 4 p.m. to 11 a.m. followed by afternoon work for cattle. In the rains regular hours are from 7 a.m. to 6 p.m. In most parts of India there is usually a recess of one or two hours at midday for food. Everywhere the hours are adjusted to summer and winter conditions. Sometimes the agricultural labourer is required to work 24 hours a day including night watch.

Low Wages

Low wages in most areas for paid labour in agriculture is another feature of the rural life. The average daily rates of

agricultural labourers in different zones and major states are given below:—

Zones and States	Men (in Annas)	Women (in Annas)
North India (U. P.)	18·8	16·8
East India	19·9	15·7
West Bengal	27·0	16·6
Bihar	20·2	17·7
Orissa	11·5	7·9
Assam	29·8	21·9
South India	16·2	9·8
Madras	15·5	9·5
Mysore	14·6	9·4
West India	18·0	12·5
Bombay	17·6	11·8
Saurashtra	21·5	19·5
Central India	12·8	8·2
M. P.	12·8	7·9
M. B.	13·7	9·4
Hyderabad	13·1	8·0
N. W. India	22·8	15·8
Punjab	28·6	21·1
PEPSU	45·0	13·7
Rajasthan	19·7	15·2
All-India	17·5	10·8

This table shows that the average wage is highest in N. W. India (23 annas) followed by East India (20 annas) and the lowest is recorded in Central India (13 annas). The average shows considerable variations among the States. While the average is 27·8 annas in Assam, and 27 annas in West Bengal, it is as low as 11·5 annas in Orissa; and 19·7 annas in Rajasthan; In Travancore-Cochin 21·4 annas and only 15 annas in Madras and Mysore. The all-India average daily wage of a woman worker (10·8 annas) is lower than even the lowest wage of a male worker (11·5 annas in Orissa). It is highest in North India, being 17 annas followed by N. W. and East India (about a rupee) and lowest in Central India (8 annas).

The following table gives the average daily wage of 'Casual' and 'attached' male workers in different zones:—

(IN ANNAS)

Zones	Casual	Attached
N. India	18.8	15.0
E. India	19.9	11.5
S. India	16.2	12.5
W. India	18.0	12.8
C. India	12.8	10.6
N. W. India	22.8	22.4
All-India	15.8	12.3

In the villages, the level of money income is lower than in the industrial areas, as will be evident from the figures given below¹ :—

COMPARATIVE WAGE RATES IN AGRICULTURE, FACTORY AND PLANTATION

States	Agriculture (1950-51)	Plantations (1950-51)	Factory Industries (1950)
1	2	3	4
Assam	29.8	18.5-20.5	60.8
Bihar	20.2	—	68.8
Bombay	17.6	—	67.2
Madras	15.5	19.5-21.8	33.6
Travancore-Cochin	21.4	20.0	—
M. P.	12.6	—	52.8
Orissa	11.5	—	38.4
Punjab	28.6	—	44.8
U. P.	18.8	—	52.8
West Bengal	27.0	19.5-21.5	45.6
All India	17.5	—	54.4

The factors responsible for lower wages of the agricultural labourers are :

- (i) The absence of any regulation forbidding child labour. This is responsible for increased labour supply in agriculture and a lowering of wages.
- (ii) Land monopoly, as was prevalent till recently, resulted in the formation of a 'Labour Reserve' under the *Zamindar*, *Malguzar*, *Thekedar* and the *Mahajan*, who advancing them substantial loans obtained a permanent

¹ B. Ramamurti, *Op. Cit.*, p. 23.

grip over them. Debt bondage is the principal cause of low wages.

(iii) The unorganised scattered nature of agricultural labourers and the seasonal character of agricultural operations reduce their bargaining capacity.

(iv) The concentration of land in the hands of upper castes (whereas the agricultural workers come mostly from the depressed classes), leads to social and economic exploitation.

(v) They have no Trade Unions to fight for wage increase and better conditions of work.

The following tables give daily agricultural wages and Rural Wages in some of the States¹ :—

DAILY AGRICULTURAL WAGES

Village	Normal Daily Working Hours	Field Labour			Other Agricultural Labour		
		Man	Woman	Child	Man	Woman	Child
Vepagunta (Andhra)	8	1 8 8	0 8 0	0 6 0	1 0 0	0 10 0	0 6 0
Rangchul (Assam)	8	2 8 0	...	...	2 8 0	...	...
Gunnar (Bombay)	8	1 8 0	1 0	0 12 0	1 8 0	1 0 0	0 12 0
Midnapur (W. Bengal)	7	1 4 0	1 0 0	...	1 4 0	1 0 0	0 10 0
Harisaudra (Mysore)	6	1 6 0	0 8 0	...	1 0 0	0 8 0	...
Ugamed (Saurashtra)	8	1 8 0	1 8 0	1 0 0	1 8 0	1 4 0	1 0 0
Balad (Ajmer)	8	0 12 0	0 8 0	0 8 0	...	...	...
		to	to	to			
		1 0 6	0 12 0	0 12 0			
Sehore (Bhopal)	7	1 8 0	1 4 0	0 12 0	1 4 0	1 0 0	0 12 0

¹ Agricultural Situation in India, Oct. 1956, p. 952-54.

DAILY RURAL WAGES IN SOME STATES

Village	Normal Daily Working Hours	Skilled Labour			Herdsman		
		Carpenter	Blacksmith	Cobbler	Man	Woman	Child
Rolapudi (Andhra)	8	1 8 0	1 0 0	1 0 0	1 0 0	1 0 0	0 14 0
Thana (Bombay)	8	4 8 0	5 0 0	4 8 0	1 8 0	1 0 0	1 0 0
Tirunelveli (Madras)	...	2 0 0	1 8 0	1 4 0	0 12 0	...	0 8 0
Ferozpur (Punjab)	8	4 0 0	4 0 0	N. A.	N. A.	N. A.	N. A.

Formerly, the method of wage payment differed from class to class and from region to region. Both cash and crop wages were paid on a daily or monthly basis. But since the War years, payment in cash, partly or wholly, has come very much in vogue. Sometimes perquisites in the form of mid-day meal, tea or tobacco, varied according to local customs is also given, *e. g.*, in the eastern parts of U.P. the wages range from 2 to 4 annas per day to Rs. 1 or Rs. 1/8 per day in the western parts. These wages are supplemented by wages in kind—chabena, grain parched or boiled, *sharbat* of an inferior kind of sugarcane juice, tobacco, etc.¹ In Madras, casual workers were paid in cash or in kind, payment varying from Re. 1 to annas 8 a day.² In Bombay, in an enquiry of 900 villages it was found that cash wages without supplement were usual in 233 villages and grain wages in 376 villages. Wages in kind were about 5 seers of jowar, while cash wages were 8 to 10 annas a day in the more prosperous villages.³

The Agricultural Labour Enquiry Committee revealed that of the total wage-employment in agriculture in India, 57·7% of man-days are paid in cash; 32·2% in kind and the balance is paid partly in cash and partly in kind. In N. W. India and West India, cash payment accounts for 79 and 76% of man-days; and in S. India 66% but in Central and East India cash wages are not so important, being paid only for 46 and 50% of man-days. The mixed system accounts for a little over 10% of the total man-days in Central and South India. The predominance of wages in kind in East India is due to Bihar where wages for 55% of man-days are paid in kind; kind wages are also more important in Hyderabad 33%; Orissa 37%; Punjab, 32% and U.P. 35·5% and M.P. 53%.

¹ Shridhar Misra, *Rural Wages in U.P.*, p. 21.

² *Agricultural Labour Enquiry Committee Report*, Vol. I, p. 114

³ *Congress Agrarian Reforms Committee*, p. 116

Cash wages are more important in Saurashtra 86%; Bombay 75%; West Bengal, 82%; Assam 96% and Hyderabad, all of which States have greater *sown* area under commercial crops. In the Punjab, cash and kind payments are of about equal importance.

Besides, wages are paid either on time or piece basis. The percentage man-days of men, women and child labourers paid under different modes of wage payment in important States and Zones in given below:—

Zones & States	Time Rates	Piece Rates	Cash	Kind	Cash & kind	With perquisites	Without perquisites
N. India (U.P.)	97.9	2.1	56.1	35.5	8.4	62.2	37.8
East India	88.7	11.3	50.1	42.5	7.4	50.9	49.1
Bihar	83.2	16.8	41.9	54.6	3.5	42.1	57.9
Orissa	96.9	3.1	41.9	37.6	20.5	9.2	90.8
Bengal	96.7	3.3	81.6	13.1	5.3	84.4	15.6
S. India	97.6	2.4	65.6	21.4	12.7	30.5	69.5
Madras	98.2	1.8	65.9	21.7	12.4	28.4	71.6
Travancore-Cochin	93.0	7.0	65.6	23.3	11.1	44.1	55.9
West India	98.8	1.2	75.8	18.2	6.0	21.1	78.9
Bombay	99.4	0.6	75.2	19.3	5.5	18.0	82.0
Central India	94.0	6.0	46.2	42.6	11.2	1.7	98.3
M. P.	87.9	12.1	37.6	53.0	9.4	0.4	99.6
M. B.	97.2	2.8	77.4	16.7	5.9	4.8	95.2
N. W. India	99.4	0.6	78.8	13.1	8.1	21.6	78.4
Punjab	97.4	2.6	35.2	32.1	32.7	29.3	70.7
Rajasthan	100.0	—	92.0	4.8	3.2	12.9	87.1
All India	94.5	5.5	57.7	32.2	10.1	33.4	66.6

Out of the total number of man-days put in by casual agricultural workers of all types, men contribute 62%; women 35% and children 3%. Casual workers, forming 85% of the total number of agricultural workers are all employed on daily wages. The rate of wages depend on the type of agricultural operation they perform. Of the total man-days put in by casual agricultural labourers, only 5.5% are paid at piece-rate. While time wages are paid for most of the agricultural operations, piece wages are paid usually for such operations as embanking, harvesting and weeding. Piece-wages are also paid wherever work has to be done expeditiously.

Housing Conditions

Agricultural labourers occupy the worst quarters and the worst huts in the villages. Men sleep on the *pial* or in open air six months

in the year. But the hut gets so overcrowded in the rainy and winter months that the inmates may be said to be couched rather than housed. Floor and walls get damp. There are no windows or chimneys for the foul air to escape from the huts. In certain cases even the sunlight does not penetrate in the interior so that it is always dark inside. These conditions lead to all sorts of fever, particularly relapsing fever which rages for months. Infant mortality is high.

Numerous cases have been found where the inmates sleep along with cattle and livestock. In Jaunpur the huts generally consist of only one dingy room with kitchen, dormitory, parlour and in many cases cattle-shed combined.¹ In village Hathwa (Gorakhpur), Mr. Mathur found that, 'a hut measuring $7 \times 12 \times 5$ ft. was occupied by 5 persons and a goat and the inmates were thin, diseased and dirty.'²

In village Sheikhdhir (Bahraich), it was found that two bullocks, fishing tackle and four members of Oriya caste labourers family were packed into a dark and stingy house measuring $14 \times 14 \times 7$ ft.³ Too often, therefore, a village family has for a home a dwelling which is scandalously below its needs, besides being leaky and unhealthy.

"To many peasants", observes Dr. Mukerjee, "the huts are simply places where one can stretch his legs and sleep in the night, and in several instances the loss of privacy blunts all sense of shame and decency. Men and women, young and old, sometimes may be seen packed together along with cattle and goats in winter, and the home that should radiate noble social and aesthetic influences, is a den of misery and disease where people breed and die like fruit flies."⁴

In brief, labourers habitually live in conditions of filth and dirt around them and with disease and debility hanging like a sword above them suspended by a hair.

Indebtedness

The Agricultural Labour Enquiry Committee have found out that 45% of the agricultural labour families are in debt (i.e., 7.8 million), the average debt being Rs. 105 per family. In Central India the percentage of indebted families is 55. The main purpose for which the debts are incurred is consumption, which accounts for Rs. 78 out of a total of Rs. 105. This shows the inefficiencies of the agricultural labour families to meet even their primary necessities

¹ B. Mista, *Over-Population in Jaunpur*, p. 55

² Mathur, *Pressure of Population in Gorakhpur*, p. 48.

³ Lorenzo, *Agricultural Labour and Marketing in Oudh*, 1932, p. 67.

⁴ Mathur, *Op Cit*, Introduction by Dr. Mukerjee

The average debt per family varies from Rs. 32 in North India to Rs. 76 in East India, Rs. 102 in South India, Rs. 108 in West India, Rs. 103 in Central India and Rs. 335 in N. W. India.

Employers, moneylenders, friends and relatives play a prominent role in advancing loans to agricultural workers while the part played by co-operatives and shop-keepers is insignificant.

Difficulties in the Way of Improvement

The foregoing description of the conditions of living and working of the agricultural labourers has made it clear that their position is worst and it deserves serious attention of those who are interested in the uplift of rural workers. The difficulties to ameliorate the conditions of rural labour are many. They are both foreign and indigenous. Capitalists and industrialists, landlords and cultivators, rulers and the ruled have all some kind of vested interest in it. Further, the farmers are obviously against any measures aimed at bringing any enlightenment to the masses whom they exploit. In such hostile atmosphere and after the day's hard work it is also difficult for the labourer to so equip himself as to learn the three R's. The age-old intellectual lethargy of the illiterate too plays its part in blocking the way to progress. The existence of the minority groups who do not take to manual labour and community problems have all intensified the situation. These difficulties will only disappear, if a proper plan for national life is drawn taking all its phases into consideration.

The problem of rural labour is no doubt a difficult one but by a careful study a determined effort should be made to educate the labourer so that he could think for himself, read for himself, and act for himself. To be frank the problem of rural labour deserves the immediate attention of all. All services, institutions, establishments and other accessories essential to the growth, nourishment, education and training of rural labour should be operated at public cost. Parental care and affection, and an atmosphere of family life are considered to be a very important factor in the normal, mental and physical make-up of the labourer. Marriage should be nationalised. There should be redistribution of population with readjustment to make agriculture with all its subsidiaries to support more than half the population. Out of the balance of the rural labour about 25% should be maintained by industries and commerce, about 10 to 15% by social public utility services. All these should be radically organised and planned.¹

Agricultural Labour and the Govt.

The appalling living and working conditions of the agricultural labourers drew the attention of the Planning Commission, who realised that the existence of large number of agricultural workers—who

¹ K. T. Shah, *Principles of Planning*, p 77,

lack sustained employment and frequently suffer from social handicaps is to be regarded as a source of serious weakness and even of instability in the present agrarian system. "The First Five Year Plan, suggested that, "Agricultural labour populations are concentrated most in areas where population presses heavily on the land and the development in sectors of the economy other than the agricultural has been retarded. By selecting such areas for special programmes—such as C. D. P.—it should be possible to make a distinct contribution to the problem of rehabilitating agricultural labourers, for increase in the tempo of development is the effective answer to the problem of unemployment and under-employment. The Plan made the following suggestions for improving the economic conditions of the agricultural labourers :

- (i) Fixation of minimum wages in low-wage pockets and intensive development areas ;
- (ii) Conferment of occupancy rights on the landless workers in regard to house sites ;
- (iii) Organisation of labour co-operatives ; and
- (iv) Resettlement schemes for landless labourers—for which a provision of Rs. 1.5 crores was made.

In the Second Plan too, greater emphasis has been laid on the need for special attention to the agricultural labourer class for two objectives : (i) fuller employment and (ii) a larger measure of social justice. The panel of economists of the Planning Commission have pointed out that, "Large sections of working force in rural areas obtain their wages or incomes much below the national average ; and social justice demands that this class is given the first chance to improve its conditions when new jobs are being created in the country." Accordingly the Second Plan provides together with the State plans, Rs. 5 crores for the settlement of about 20,000 families of landless workers on 100,000 acres of land.

Fixation of Minimum Wages

Rates of minimum wages for agricultural workers have been fixed in 17 out of the 9 states, to which the Minimum Wages Act has been applied. These States are Ajmer, Bilaspur, Coorg, Delhi, H. P., Kutch, PEPSU, Punjab, Rajasthan, Tripura, Assam, Bihar, Bombay, Mysore, U. P., V. P. and West Bengal. The table on page 78 shows the minimum wage rates for important occupations in agriculture¹.

Suggestions for Improvement

The following are a few suggestions for the improvement of the rural labour which may prevent the increase of landless class and lead to stabilisation of agricultural labour conditions :—

¹ *Report on the Working of the Minimum Wages Act, 1948 for the period from March 1948 to 31st Dec., 1953 (1955).*

State	Ploughing	Sowing	Trans-planting	Weeding	Wages' Rates for Children
Ajmer	1 0 0	1 0 0	0 12 0	0 12 0	...
Bihar	1 Sr. 12 ch. to 1 Sr. 14 ch. of rice or wheat and $\frac{1}{2}$ Sr. <i>Satoo</i>	2 Srs 3 ch. to 2 Srs. 6 ch. of rice or wheat + 10 ch <i>Satoo</i>	Same as for ploughing and sowing	...	...
Bilaspur	1 8 0	1 8 0	1 8 0	1 8 0	0 10 0
Bombay	1 0 0	1 0 0	0 12 0	0 12 0	0 8 0
Coorg	1 5 0	1 5 0	1 5 0	1 5 0	0 10 6
Delhi	2 0 0	2 0 0	1 8 0	1 8 0	...
Punjab	1 8 0	1 8 0	1 0 0	1 0 0	...
	to	to		to	
	2 8 0	2 8 0		1 8 0	
Kutch	...	0 12 0	0 12 0	0 12 0	0 5 0
Rajasthan	1 4 0	1 4 0	1 4 0	1 4 0	0 10 0
Tripura	2 0 0	2 0 0	2 0 0	2 0 0	0 0 0
U. P.	1 0 0	1 0 0	1 0 0	1 0 0	0 10 0
West Bengal	...	1 8 0	to 2 4 0	per day in	0 14 0
			different localities		to 1 4 0

(i) Regulation of Hours of Work

The question of fixing hours of work for the agricultural labourer in India has often been raised, but no serious attempts have been made to give it a practical shape. In Europe, where arable farming is associated with stock-raising and there is distribution of employment over the whole year for a permanent staff, it has been practicable to limit hours of employment. In such countries as England and Germany, which have developed industrialised farming, hours of work may be fixed with ease on account of somewhat permanent nature of employment. But so uniform a distribution of employment is unknown in Indian farming where hours of labour are unequally divided among different seasons, and where both in the sowing and the harvesting seasons the labourers must work long hours on account of the nature of their work and special difficulties of Indian agriculture.

It cannot be denied that in India casual labourers have to work for very long hours and under very trying conditions because they are neither protected by legislation nor by organised bodies such as the English Labourers' Union or the Polish and Swedish Collective Agreements Societies, which have met with striking success in securing better terms for their members. But the statutory hours regulation of labour would seem to depend purely on the question whether a capitalised system of agriculture has given rise to a class of land workers who have succeeded in attaining some degree of organisation.

among themselves. Several countries like Italy, Spain, Germany, Czechoslovakia have already passed regulations concerning the hours of work in agriculture on the basis of National Legislation; and considering the gravity of the agrarian situation in India where labour is disorganised and weak, the exodus from the country to the town is creating much mischief and unrest in urban areas, and agricultural unemployment is constantly increasing. A national policy in this direction is not only opportune but imperative.

Therefore, an effective scheme of National Labour Legislation for the regulation of hours of work on the field should be based on the peculiar conditions of agriculture and the circumstances of the country. Following suggestions may be made in this connection :—

1. Prof. Ranga has remarked that the hours of work may be allowed to vary from time to time and from place to place, but care should be taken that the maximum number of hours does not exceed 12 hours for the males, and 10 hours for females on any one day and 56 hours in any week, and special scales of pay are prescribed for overtime payment over and above 8 hours. In this connection the practice of fixing the total number of hours per annum may also be considered as provided in the Collective Agreements; in Sweden, 10 hours a day and the maximum total of 2,700 hours per annum; in Germany a maximum of 2,900 hours per annum; and in Czechoslovakia 2,618 hours to not exceeding 3,000 hours per annum.¹ In India, however, it is difficult to fix the number of hours by week or by month on account of the temporary nature of employment. For different parts of India a daily maximum of 10 hours, not counting the interval for meals, and an yearly total of 3,622 hours may with advantage be laid down. The Agrarian Reform Committee suggests that the day should not exceed in any case 12 hours for males and 10 hours for females and that extra payment be made if the work exceeds 8 hours.

2. This fixation of working hours should apply to all agricultural businesses which employ hired help, and to all classes of wage-earning labourers, casual or permanent, whether doing piece work or employed by day.

3. Work should not be done at a stretch. There should be a gap of at least 1 hour between the morning and afternoon working hours during the winter and the rainy season, but this gap should be of at least four hours during the summer.

4. It is also necessary to fix the minimum duration of work during the winter and the maximum duration during the summer, e.g., in Australia the Farm and Forest Workers' Association lays down that agricultural workers shall work 8 hours a day during the three winter months and ten hours a day during the rest of the year, while

¹ International Labour Conference, Third Session, 1921, *Report II*, p. 29-44.

during the three harvest months the hours per day are increased to 11 with extra pay for the additional hour. Similarly, in Poland Collective Agreements have fixed the hours of work in agriculture as follows : A daily maximum of $11\frac{1}{2}$ hours for the months of June and July, a daily minimum of $6\frac{1}{2}$ hours for the months of December and January, an annual average of nine hours and 20 minutes per day. In India the seasonal adjustment of hours of work may also be made in the following way, Duration of hours during summer 10 ; 11 during the monsoon and 9 during the winter months.

5. Overtime work should not be allowed to finish the task ; but for a greater work a fresh contingent should be employed.

6. Night work should in no cases be allowed in the case of women and child labour. Even in the cases of adult male labourers, they should be allowed to work in night on these conditions ; (1) That during the summer by reason of the heat, when the day work is much more trying than night work, the worker should be given the choice of work at night, to complete the day's unfinished work, provided the ten-hour limit is not exceeded. (a) That adequate protection is given against possibilities of overtime work, and ample facilities provided for work in dark and rainy nights.

7. Measures to control the application of agricultural labour protection should proceed by legislative enactment. All employers should be required to maintain a Workers' Register, showing the terms of employment and conditions and nature of work. The violation of labour employment laws should be severely punished, either by heavy fines or withdrawal of permission to employ hired help.

Improvement in the Conditions of Work

Sweating with its triple evil of long hours of work, insanitary conditions and low wages is common in agriculture. It is a common sight to see the agricultural workers working in dirty mud and water during the rainy season, or in the scorching heat of the summer, digging the ground and thatching houses or working on the fields in the early hours of winter when they are exposed to very strong, cold, biting winds. Children and women working under similar unhealthy conditions considerably suffer from a host of diseases like itches, ring-worm, and other skin diseases. During summer sun-stroke is very common and during the cold winter the exposure of the children is a sure herald of quick death. It is, therefore, necessary that not only the working conditions are made healthy but adequate protection should be given by way of insurance against illness, accident and unemployment.

In India night work during the summer, specially on moonlit nights, is recommended to avoid the trying weather of the day, provided a compensatory rest period during the day is effectively secured. In order to improve the working conditions of the

labourers it is necessary to give consideration to the following measures :—

(1) Only male adult workers should work during the rainy season when liability to disease is high and conditions of work difficult.

(2) Women and children should be prohibited from heavy work done under unhealthy conditions.

(3) Out-door work during the months of May and June should be prohibited.

(4) Women with four months' pregnancy or more should stop all manual labour.

(5) In the event of illness or accident due to the nature of the work, the employer should pay at least one-third of the wages during the period of disability.

(6) A periodical physical fitness examination should be held by a qualified doctor employed by the Rural Development Department or the Rural Labour Commissioner, and the weaklings and physically unfit should be withheld from the employment in hard labour.

(7) The nature and amount of work and the conditions under which it is performed, should be under the special care of the Labour Officer.

Protection of Women Labourers

The wretched working conditions under which the women labourers have to work in the fields call for immediate legislation to safeguard their interests. The legislative measures should apply only to regular wage-earners in agriculture, and no difference should be made between agricultural undertakings employing female labour in groups. The International Labour Conference recommends that, "Measures should be taken to ensure to women earners employed in agricultural undertakings protection before and after child-birth similar to that provided by the International Draft Convention adopted by the International Labour Conference at Washington for women employed in Industry and Commerce, and that such measures should include the right to a period of absence from work before and after child-birth, and to a grant of benefit during the said periods, provided either out of public funds or by means of a system of insurance."¹ Some countries like Finland, Great Britain, and Switzerland have already got general insurance schemes which include Maternity Insurance. A series

¹ International Labour Conference, *Third Session Report*

of laws has established measures for the protection of women workers in agriculture in Soviet Russia and granted them special privileged conditions. This has greatly improved their cultural level and living conditions. During pregnancy and child-birth, women are allowed time off with full pay for a period of 8 weeks before and 8 weeks after the child-birth. The U. S. S. R. spends huge amounts on Socialized Restaurants, Children's Nurseries, Sanatoria, Kindergartens and Hygiene Institutes, which relieve women of a large part of their domestic burdens.¹

In India, owing to the breaking up of the rigidity of customs and traditions, the employment of women labourers in all forms of agricultural occupations, and the employment almost entirely of married women, the need for the prohibition of the employment of women before and after confinement appears to be imperative. In India the protective measures adopted should be extended to those women workers who are employed on a farm permanently: women workers who are not members of the farmers' family; women workers employed individually or in groups, casual unspecified labourers, dairy maids, and domestic servants. Besides:

1. In view of the poverty of the masses work should be stopped two months before and at least one month after child-birth.
2. An allowance of half an hour twice a day should be made, in addition to meal time, for the purpose of nursing the baby, for the second and third month after the child-birth.
3. Child Welfare and Maternity Centres should be increased and Health Visitors to work in conjunction with the rural Labour Inspector should be provided.
4. Necessary State Aid should be provided to the independent workers' funds during maternity period as well as free attendance by a qualified doctor or certified midwife.

Protection of Child Workers in Agriculture

In India the direct legislation regarding agricultural employment of children is very difficult because though in factories the labour legislation is made possible by the organisation and extension of a Factory Inspection Department, the conditions in agriculture are so diverse that inspection over the vast areas becomes very costly and inefficient. It is, therefore, necessary that here reliance should be placed on the indirect application of other laws as have been introduced in the U. S. A., and other European countries, such as compulsory school attendance laws in the U. S. A., in 27 out of 48 states, employment of children during the school hours, in any gainful occupation is definitely forbidden. This applies to

¹ Kraval, *Op. Cit*, p 420-23.

children under 16 years for 8 months in the year unless they have completed the eighth grade of the elementary school. In Canada the "Adolescent School Attendance Act" fixes the minimum age of employment in agriculture between 14 and 16 years. The Czechoslovakia Act of 1919 prohibits the general employment of children under 12 years of age. In Denmark school attendance is compulsory up to the age of 14. In Great Britain the boys below the age of 10 are prohibited to work in agriculture.

But it is unfortunate to see that in India, however, no such measures have yet been taken. The compulsory attendance and age limit for schooling has failed miserably. It is high time that action should be taken now to protect the child labour in agriculture from their ruthless exploitation. The necessary provision should be sought along the following lines :—

1. Educational Laws should be so framed that they may demand a certain period of attendance on the part of the children, failing which penalties should be imposed on those responsible for the breach of these laws.

2. Child employment during the school hours should be totally prohibited. It would be very good if the rural schools are closed down during the sowing and harvesting period, when there is experienced a shortage of labour in the fields. Besides this it would be really beneficial if an effective method of ensuring the working of Educational Laws are fixed to a minimum period, of say 8 months in the year, below which the school instruction should not be reduced.

3. Child labour should be prohibited from employment in dangerous tasks involving the operation of complex machinery, requiring hard manual labour, and other injurious and hard tasks.

4. The child labour should be given a day's holiday during a week.

It must be noted that however elaborate, indirect legislation can hardly be effective without positive legislative measures. Provisions have, therefore, to be made to handle a care-free population such as we find in this country. Therefore, the first step in this direction would be to strengthen the Educational Laws in regard to Compulsory Education in rural areas.

Organisation of Vocational & Technical Education

Another measure urgently required to ameliorate the condition of agricultural workers would be the organisation of vocational and technical education. Vocational agricultural education is necessary not only in the interest of the agricultural worker but in that of the entire nation, because such education will have a special

importance in securing better conditions of livelihood to agricultural workers of all classes, preventing unemployment, increasing production, checking the rural exodus, and helping the landless proletariat to become an independent cultivator. Some measures towards ruralizing schools, imparting basic education and introducing special technical courses for agricultural workers have been initiated by various State Governments in India. At present there is the need of general mass education and technical agricultural education—the former to produce better citizens, and the latter to improve the earning capacity of rural workers. It is particularly desirable that all elementary instruction in rural districts should be directed to the formation of an agrarian consciousness in the children who would then, when they grow up, infallibly seek that technical agricultural instruction to which at present the masses of the rural population do not attach sufficient importance even where the greatest facilities are offered for them. This can be done by opening Agricultural Apprenticeship Centres, Rural Constitution Schools, Night Clubs and Summer Camps for rural children. Great importance should also be attached to the organization of schools of Domestic Science and Household Management for village girls.

Development in the Amenities of Rural Life

There is also the need for developing the amenities of rural life. We should not only introduce agencies for the promotion of organized recreation, but try to bring order and beauty into rural life. The countryside must be made beautiful and attractive both by the preservation of natural beauty and the development of rural architecture. The disparity between the town and the country can be reduced by providing the rural masses with facilities for aesthetic development. In India, the dire economic struggle through which practically all rural people have to pass, has developed a philosophy of life which considers remunerative work alone as righteous. This 'work-attitude' has considerably slowed up the introduction of organized recreation into rural life, and has caused rural exodus and rural degeneration. The monotony and distraction of rural life can be broken by a systematic promotion of social welfare and economic prosperity of the agricultural population by the organization of village *Akharas* (physical culture institutes), Community Field Days and Festivals, Dramatic Societies (*Natak Mandlis*), and village *Bagichis* (Clubs), and also by holding inter-village competitions in wrestling, music and sports. This should be supplemented by occasional talks from eminent villagers and towns-folk on matters concerning rural life and labour. There should also be well-equipped rural libraries and night schools run by philanthropic individuals or private institutions should receive Government aid and encouragement. These facilities will enable the country-folk to participate in the amenities of urban life. This will require not only the planning of practical programmes but also the co-ordinations of agencies of propaganda and social control, such

as the Panchayats, Village Social Welfare Leagues, Kisan Sabhas, Praja Mandals, the Radio and the Rural Stage.

Establishment of Social Clinics

Finally, there is the all-important need for establishing Social Clinics and launching a programme of National Self-Direction. Social Control, whether in the form of taboo, custom or law, or by an enlightened public opinion, is necessary to regulate the conduct of members in society. But in order to make control effective the symptoms of each social evil have to be studied by experts. Each nation, therefore, should make it a point to establish Social Clinics to facilitate experiment and research in social problems and employ the services of technicians in the solution of these problems, otherwise it will be difficult to follow successfully the programme of National Self-Direction. Population control is the first and most pressing of all social questions in India. The growing disparity between food and mouths, and the consequent lowering down of the general standard of living, most urgently demand social reform.

Thus it may be said that the position of the agriculturists in India could never be ameliorated by pseudo-economic measures which could end only the vicious circle, but could be improved only by teaching them how to limit the size of their families. Owing to lack of knowledge of birth control, or self-control, or due to ill-occupied leisure, many classes of agricultural workers, specially those on the lowest rung of the social ladder, are breeding like rabbits and rats, ultimately increasing the nation's social liabilities. There is, therefore, not only the need for an effective control of marriages but also of the inculcation of eugenic ideas into the people in order to maintain a relative proportion between the well-born and ill-born.¹ In population India does not require numbers so much as quality. In order to improve the physical and intellectual standards of the country, Eugenics should become an orthodox religious tenet of our future life. But allied to the question of population control are the problems of child welfare and nutrition. Rural children are neglected not only in the pre-school period but perhaps even more seriously during the school period. The dire poverty of the masses compels them to subsist on an ill-balanced and inadequate diet which undermines, in the critical period of growth, the health and efficiency of the growing generation. The problem of rational dietetics and nutrition should at once draw the attention of our economists and sociologists so that some reliable data may be available for constructing our future programme. The establishment of Social Clinics will not only provide better opportunities for aspiring members to cultivate their habits and discipline

¹ Gandhi, M. K., *Self-Restraint versus Self-Indulgence*, the British Committee on the Ethics of Birth Control, and Kuezyński, *Balance of Births and Deaths* Vol. I, pp. 40-43.

their conduct under proper auspices and healthy social environment, but will guide the guardians of the Social Mind and facilitate the progress of National Self-Direction.

Provision of Social Security Benefits

In the interest of improvement of the social and economic conditions of agricultural workers, it is urgently necessary that they should enjoy the benefit of Social Insurance. Agricultural workers should be placed on the same footing as industrial workers and should receive adequate protection against sickness and invalidity, and have provision for old age.

It is no exaggeration to say that the five giants referred to by Sir William Beveridge, *viz.*, Want, Disease, Ignorance, Squalor and Idleness, hold under their grip the lives of large masses of rural people. A simultaneous attack on these five giants should be launched, for all are interconnected and act in a vicious circle. The three-fold approach. (i) Constructive Community Services, (ii) Subsidized Consumption Services and (iii) Social Security Measures, I believe, postulates such an attack. Constructive Community Services such as free compulsory education up to a certain standard, public health and medical services and Subsidized Consumption Services such as housing, free supply of milk, etc., together aim at destroying the last four giants. Social Security seeks to attack the first one. Constructive Community Services are 'national' in scope in so far as they aim at the improvement of the 'mental' and 'environmental hygiene' of all residents in villages. As such foremost priority should be given to the 'national' services.

Notwithstanding the first two types of protection, need makes itself felt during periods of disability, caused by sickness, accident, old age and unemployment. Inability to earn wages during these periods drives them into debt or destruction which cannot prevent without collective assistance. Two kinds of assistance are necessary, *viz.*, (a) medical assistance and (b) compensation for wage loss. The double-deck system of insurance and assistance comprehensively called 'Social Security' seeks to provide these two kinds of assistance. Insurance is regarded as generally inapplicable to agricultural labourers owing to their heterogeneous composition and formidable difficulties in fixing and collecting contributions. Referring to conditions in India Prof. Adarkar opines, "In all probability social assistance will have to be the main method of approach in the case of agricultural masses."¹ The report of the Bhole Committee also supports this conclusion with particular reference to medical services in rural areas.²

¹ Adarkar, *Planning of Social Security in India*, p. 10

² *Report of the Health Development and Survey Committee*, p. 5,

Sickness in rural areas is at present heavy but of a preventible kind. Hence, it is suggested that Health Insurance should be adopted in India and with the improvement of environmental health services the high incidence is bound to fall down. Under improved conditions, their open-air occupations coupled with reasonable hours of work would minimize the cost of assistance and where sickness cases occur, it should be cured and cash benefit or more preferably, in kind such as provision of necessities to the beneficiary and the members of his family should be assured.

Rural medical assistance should give the first preference to maintaining the health of mothers and children below 10 years. Assistance should be in the form of skilled medical aid and maintenance of benefit. Confinement and delivery in properly equipped institutions would secure the former. The Bhore Committee recommends a dispensary with two beds for maternity cases, one woman doctor, four public health nurses, four mid-wives and four trained dais in a primary unit serving a population of about 10,000 to 20,000.¹ This is a reasonable proportion to start with and should be implemented. They have also recommended the gradual extension of compulsory abstention from work for a period of six weeks before confinement to all women gainfully employed outside their homes, as over-work affects a woman's health both during pregnancy and in the post-natal period.² Maintenance benefit too is of vital importance as the pregnant women, nursing mothers and growing children require a more generous and nourishing diet than the general population and hence the services for these two sections of population, however elaborate and efficient, will fail to produce satisfactory results unless simultaneous measures are taken to improve their nutrition.³ For women and children of low income groups this can be secured through subsidized consumption services such as supply of milk and other valuable additions to diet either free of cost or at nominal prices. Compensation for wage loss for working class women should be provided preferably by supply of necessities through multipurpose societies in the villages, the cost being borne by the Assistance Authorities.

Unemployment among the rural labour should be, as far as possible, checked by starting rural subsidiary occupations. The Royal Commission on Agriculture, the Famine Commission and the Planning Commission have recognised *inter alia* the development of Cottage and Agro-industries with the aid of cheap electric power.⁴

¹ *Report, Op. Cit.*, pp 7, 27.

² *Report, Op. Cit.*, p. 28

³ *Ibid*, p 28

⁴ *Report of Royal Commission on Agriculture*, p 566 and *Report of Famine Enquiry Commission* (1915), p 312, *Second Five Year Plan*, p. 318.

Social assistance promises to secure the much-needed protection for agricultural labourer. Nominal contributions from even the low-income groups, should be raised through multi-purpose societies, in which membership should be made compulsory. The State should follow the principle of payment 'according to capacity' and 'benefit according to need.' Further voluntary organisations should act as 'watch-dogs' on state social services, so as to prevent their incursions into individual enterprise and infringement of individual liberty. In this connection, the organisation of Rural Community Councils, corresponding to the Urban Community Councils of England may be considered. Their task will be to secure co-operation as fully as possible, to review steadily the social needs and social provision of the area and to enhance the welfare of the inhabitants. Their business is not so much to carry on social services themselves as to see that they are carried on.

Conclusion

In short, our planning for rural labour should, "involve measures for conserving our soil resources for diversion of land to sound uses, for the shifting of population from one part of the country to the other, for adequate training and education of the masses, for the organisation of some form of collectivism and socialised democracy, which will make bread and shelter as freely accessible to every one as water and use of roads now in civilised countries."¹

The above proposals would require an army of workers for fruition. Ambitious plans can only mature if there are proper persons to carry them out. A Board or a Committee shall have to be set up to formulate schemes and put them into practice. A beginning shall have to be made sooner or later. Difficulties would arise in initial stages and doubters would shake heads but if plans are pushed on with an iron will and determination they would undoubtedly succeed. The barrier of conservatism would be broken and a new and bright chapter would open in the hitherto luckless history of rural labour. The working class now backward and behind would shake off its misery. With robust national policies and men to work them, let our rural labourer have better schools for his children better shops and hospitals, better transport facilities and supplies of running water, gas and electricity in his home.

¹ Wadia and Merchant, *Our Economic Problems*.

CHAPTER V

WOMAN LABOUR

Why, it may reasonably be asked, is it desirable to give special attention to women workers in industry? What characteristics of women workers entitle them to special consideration? In what ways are such workers an important conditioning factor to the economic function of labour as a whole?

Woman is a fascinating subject for study. Forming roughly half the human race since creation, the status of women has not yet been clearly defined. In primitive society we could, however, distinguish a fundamental division of labour under which men fought, hunted and went to sea and women engaged in less dangerous and more circumscribed occupations. This basic division of labour illustrates most aptly the forces which probably operated to give human society its orientation towards a division of activities between men and women.¹ Nevertheless, every known economic system has utilised and presumably required the work of women and women obviously need work both for their maintenance and for their happiness as human beings and members of society.

One answer to these questions is that working women are distinguished from all other industrial workers not by the arbitrary actions of those who study their problems, but by distinctive attitudes and actions of modern society including employers, other workers, and women workers themselves. In addition, however, there are other reasons why society is particularly interested in women workers. Their employment may have significant effect upon home life and upon the health of children. At the same time, their participation in economic activity may exert significant effects upon other employment conditions, including those of males. There are, therefore, numerous important labour problems that arise out of the employment of women in modern industry.

Distinctive Features of Women Workers

- (1) Ruskin's idea that "the man is the doer, the creator, the discoverer, defender and the warrior and woman is meant for sweet order, management and decision" is fast disappearing. Man for field and woman for health—this is no longer recognised by all. Even in the recent years, since women have been allowed to vote—they think that they have equal right for work, women are frequently

¹ *Encyclopaedia of the Social Sciences*, Vol. VIII, pp. 439-40.

regarded as usual rather than unusual in the industrial structure.

- (2) Particularly because working women have seldom been organised and have generally been willing to accept lower wages than men and because they have seldom been economically independent, employers have tended to develop an attitude that depreciate the services of women worker. They are often regarded as cheap, easily controlled labour as distinguished from more expensive and less docile male employees.
- (3) Many women workers regard themselves as inherently inferior and subordinate to men and thus consider their lesser positions inevitable. They know in many cases that they are 'extras', that they are in industry but not of it, that their status is temporary. Their own conception of their position thus sets them apart from male workers and is probably as effective in achieving this end as is any other condition.
- (4) There is a rather distinct feeling of competition and opposition on the part of male workers towards women in industry. It is unquestionably heightened in the industrial situation by general belief on the part of male workers that women are unfair competitors, that they tend to injure working conditions in industry and to displace men. Overt manifestations of this current attitude are observable in opposition to the admission of women to membership in trade unions. These current attitudes have left their marks upon the situation in which women workers are employed. Attitudes of the public, for instance, are reflected in legal limitations upon hours and conditions under which women are permitted to work. Those characteristics of employers are shown in women's lower wages and in frequent harsh and arbitrary treatment accorded to female employees.

Women's Increasing Participation in Industry

Women have always worked. Even when 'Adam delved and Eve span' woman was not a 'drone' in the household but an active 'bee' and had distinct economic functions to perform. In primitive Societies, in the stages in industrial development described as the direct appropriation and the pastoral stages women workers performed almost as numerous and as varied tasks as did men, although some specialisation early appeared. Generally this early division of labour was based upon sex difference and women found household tasks—cooking, the preparation of clothing and the tending of agricultural patches delegated to them, because they

were kept at home by their closer relationship with children. In the agricultural stage, this division of labour became more fixed and the appearance of a class of independent male artisans encouraged its acceptance as customary and proper. Thus early women workers were not directly competitive with males.

The beginning of the modern industrial era starting with the Industrial Revolution witnessed a tremendous change in the character of work assigned to women. As the technological changes of the Industrial Revolution transformed the processes of production, the women of the urban proletariat and many of the artisan classes were drawn into factories, mills and mines as unskilled wage earners. The majority of women found it necessary to work outside the household in order to augment the family income. When the increased cost of living necessitated earnings supplementary to those of the chief wage earners it was deemed preferable that the daughters and young children should work for wages. At the same time, industry, seeking to keep down costs of production in order to keep up profits, offered only the supplementary wages to the daughters while the wages of men were reduced to a level which made it necessary for the daughters to work. "The employment of women in countries of Industrial capitalism has thus been a development arising neither from society's requirement of women's work in industry nor from women's inherent need for work, but in the main from the desire of entrepreneurs to utilise cheap labour for profit-making purposes."¹

The transition from work at home to work in the factory was not, however, a smooth one for women. Although they could adapt themselves to their new conditions, they could not visualise the tremendous changes in their social and economic life brought about by modern industrialisation. The factory system destroyed a great body of significant customs throwing the worker in to where they had neither experience nor tradition to help them.² In fact the beginnings of sociological investigations can be traced to the sweated conditions, prevailing in trades where women and children were largely employed. Thomas Hood in his "Song of the Shirt" depicted the sad plight of women employed in clothing factories :

"With fingers weary and worn
With eyelids heavy and red,
A woman sat in unwomanly sags
Plying her needle and thread.

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¹ *Encyclopaedia of the Social Sciences*, Vol VIII, p 453.

² Philip Taft, *Economics and Problem of Labour*, p 247.

Oh ! Men with sisters dear !
 Oh ! Men with mothers and wives !
 It is not linen that you are wearing out
 But human creatures lives !”

Present-day protective legislation was initially devised to protect working women and children. The worst conditions in our country were in the cotton and gins and presses. One witness stated before the Factory Commission of 1885, “The ginning season lasts about eight months, about five of which the hands work 5 a.m. to 10 p.m. and the remaining three months they work day and night. The hands are mostly women. Gins and presses never stop for meals, as a rule the hands take their meals at the gins and he has often seen them taking their food and supplying the gins at the same time. He has often seen them supplying the gins thus mechanically three parts a sleep and a child at the breast. Sucking one minute and throwing cotton in the machine the next. The women are looked on as part of the gins and they belonged to the establishment.”¹ The conditions in the coal mines were in the same respects worse than in factories. Though the hours were not excessive, women and children were working at all hours of the night.²

Traditional views regarding the conditions of service of women employed in industry are gradually disappearing throughout the world and India is no exception to this. In fact in regard to the remuneration of women and the conditions of their service, Article 31 of the Indian Constitution states as follows :—

“The State shall in particular, direct its policy towards securing that the citizens, men and women equally have the right to an adequate means of livelihoodthat there is equality for equal work for both men and women, that the strength and health of workers, men and women, and the tender age of children are not abused and that the citizens are not faced by economic necessity to enter avocations unsuited to their age or strength.”

Employment of Women

Women in Indian industry, as elsewhere, were assigned those occupations which did not call for any particular skill or those for which they showed special aptitudes such as reeling and winding in the cotton and feeding and receiving in the jute textile industry. By long usage these occupations came to be regarded as “Women’s Job,” and men often thought it *infra dig* to work

¹ Dr. Buchanan, *The Development of Capitalistic Enterprise in India*, pp 304-5

² *Ibid*, p 307.

on these jobs. Customs and traditions restrict in a large measure industrial occupations for women. But the First World War changed some of the conceptions regarding women's capacity to work. "In the war period the theory that women's capacity and physical strength limited their range of occupations which had been used to justify lower wages and exclusion from skilled trades, was discredited in the face of the feverish desire of industry to produce for the war. Women were drawn into men's work in production and began to handle machines which they had never operated before and take part in many new tasks in the heavy industries, in metal trades, in engineering trades and in transportation."¹ The Second World War accentuated the importance of the role which women could take in economic activity outside the occupations assigned to them by custom and usage. "First in thousands and then in tens and hundreds of thousands young and not so young women voluntarily enter industry or agriculture" substituting "themselves for men who were taken into the armed forces."²

It has to be admitted that women workers are in many respects handicapped on account of their physical structure and social and psychological backgrounds. A recent survey conducted in Canada revealed some interesting facts :"³

- (i) On an average women are only 85% as heavy as men and have only 60% as much physical strength. Therefore, they can not lift or hold as heavy weights :
- (ii) Women are built on a much smaller anatomical scale than men and, hence, machines built to the scale of men often require excessive reaching or stretching on the part of women and the height of the work bench is often unsuitable ;
- (iii) Usually women are more valuable than men to situations in industry which produce fatigue. Many women have responsibilities before and after work which cause excessive fatigue ;
- (iv) Women are ill more frequently and lose more time from work than men, and
- (v) Women with young children and pregnant women are at a disadvantage from the point of view of employment."

In their study of the Law and Women's Work, the I. L. O. has described some of the special problems arising out of women's employment. "The employment of women has certain special aspects

¹ *Encyclopedia of Social Science*, Vol. III, p. 455.

² Cole and Postgate, *The Common People*, pp. 532-33.

³ Quoted in *Economic and Social Status of Women*.

which can be considered apart. These are the consequences in the field of labour of the physical differentiation between men and women. Woman is generally less resistant to physical strain So that when she engages in manual work she is exposed to special dangers which threaten not only herself but also future generations. Moreover, the social position of women is very different from that of other workers. By custom and tradition she is responsible for the management of home, in addition to her occupational task, there are a multitude of domestic tasks which she assumes; house-keeping, the care of children and the repair of clothing for members of the family. A first consequence of this is that the working woman would inevitably be overworked and would ruin her health if certain measures of social protection were not taken; in the second place, her attention is to some extent distracted from the collective interests of the workers, and in particular, she shrinks from the extra effort involved in taking active part in the Trade Union movement. In addition, the fact of the woman's time being divided between her occupational work and her numerous domestic tasks often makes her economic activity unsuitable and reduces her occupational value and her ability to defend her interests as a worker."¹

The following statement shows the total number of adult workers employed in different types of work¹.—

Sector	Total No. of Adult Workers	No of Women Workers	% of women Workers to total
1. Factories ..	27,74,557	3,42,148	12.3
2. Mines ...	4,71,761	96,506	20.5
3. Plantations ...	11,41,647	5,32,406	46.6
4. Municipalities ...	1,18,647	28,269	23.7
5. P. W. D. and River Valley Projects,	20,59,579	4,58,936	22.3

Women in Factories

The following tabular statement shows the total number of workers employed in factories since 1927 and the proportion of women among the factory workers.

¹ I L O, *The Law and Women's Work*, pp viii-ix *Workers in India*, p 4.

² *Economic and Social Status of Women Workers in India*, p 11

AVERAGE DAILY EMPLOYMENT IN FACTORIES¹

Years	Total No. employed	Women workers employed	Percentage of women to total
1927	1,432,029	242,666	16.95
1929	1,533,169	257,161	16.70
1932	1,329,133	215,381	16.20
1937	1,675,869	237,933	14.20
1939	1,751,137	243,516	13.90
1942	2,282,237	265,118	11.62
1943	2,436,312	265,509	10.90
1944	2,522,753	273,244	10.83
1945	2,642,949	306,626	11.60
1946	2,314,587	271,997	11.75
1947	2,274,689	263,923	11.60
1948	2,360,201	268,615	11.38
1949	2,433,966	275,710	11.33
1951	2,536,544	283,884	11.2
1952	2,567,454	...	...
1953	2,528,026	...	...

The following table shows the average daily number of workers employed in factories by Sex :—

AVERAGE DAILY NUMBER OF WORKERS EMPLOYED IN FACTORIES SUBMITTING RETURNS ACCORDING TO STATES BY AGE AND SEX DURING 1952.

State	Total employment	Adults		Adolescents	Children
		Men	Women		
Assam	66,601	52,591	10,554	2,551	905
Bihar	167,878	152,239	12,927	1,902	810
Bombay	740,529	662,902	73,600	9,796	231
Madhya Pradesh	100,842	76,840	23,429	468	105
Madras	381,739	282,115	91,800	4,888	2,936
Orissa	18,069	14,233	3,237	590	9
Punjab	52,822	49,786	2,451	338	247
Uttar Pradesh	206,832	203,531	2,707	462	132
West Bengal	626,620 ²	574,141	49,712	2,330	437
Ajmer	15,603	14,452	898	253	...
Cooing	313 ³	135	94	...	...
Delhi	36,993	36,039	640	157	157
Andaman and Nicobar Islands	1,264	1,215	16	33	...
Total	2,416,105	2,120,219	272,065	17,768	5,969

¹ Ministry of Labour, Government of India, *Economic and Social Status of Women Workers in India*, 1953, p. 12

² The figure includes estimated data relating to factories not submitting returns

³ Detailed sex classification of 84 persons not known.

A study of the distribution of labour according to industries shows that the largest number of women workers are employed in the textile industry. Other important industries from the point of view of the number of women workers are food, gins and presses, tobacco, non-metallic mineral products and chemical and chemical products. The table on page 97 shows the distribution of employment in the different industries.¹

In recent years the decline in the incidence of women's employment in cotton textiles has been mainly due to the introduction of the system of multiple shift working and change-over of shifts. Because of the restriction imposed by the Factories Act regarding employment of women during night men workers had to be employed in the night shifts even in those occupations which were traditionally considered to be women's occupations. The fixation of unform minimum wages and dearness allowance and the introduction of the system of rationalisation also caused the declines in the number of women workers. During the war years there was a sudden increase in the employment of women because mills considered efficiency per machine and not per worker as a criterion for making profits. With the fixation of minimum work loads and standardisation of wage it was impossible to continue such conditions and the surplus labour among women workers was retrenched.

The following table gives the daily employment in Mines :—

		Average daily number of workers employed						
Year	No of mines	Underground		Open working		Surface		Total
		Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	

1929	1732	92,865	24,089	54,235	28,728	51,954	17,839	269,701
1939	1864	146,827	...	50,306	26,253	57,765	24,093	305,344
1941	1908	165,356	...	55,635	32,776	64,836	29,334	347,937
1943	2329	153,455	7,111	56,636	32,547	66,867	32,745	349,361
1945	2151	137,279	22,517	62,335	32,975	91,698	39,486	386,290
1947	1976	151,200	...	63,228	40,067	101,585	51,183	407,263
1949	2032	166,906	...	62,873	38,356	106,210	46,814	421,159
1951	...	220,312	...	89,467	54,107	129,662	55,500	549,048
1952	...	183,353		29,148		126,237		341,738
1953	...	181,973		28,866		126,957		337,798
1954	...	181,280		28,457		122,583		332,320
1955	...	187,593		30,161		122,861		340,615
1956	...	187,068		29,823		116,499		333,390

¹ *Inhan Labour Gazette*, 1954.

² *Indian Labour Year Book*, 1951-52, and *Indian Labour Gazette*, March, 1957, p 745.

³ Since 1947 figures relates to Part A States and the States of Delhi and Ajmer.

⁴ Information relates to all States.

AVERAGE DAILY NUMBER OF WORKERS EMPLOYED IN FACTORIES SUBMITTING RETURNS ACCORDING TO
INDUSTRY, BY AGE AND SEX, DURING 1952 AND DEC., 1955

Industry	Adults		Adolescents	Children	Total	December, 1955
	Men	Women				
01 Processes allied to agriculture (Gins and presses).	47,601	37,006	109	42	84,758	63,354
20 Food except beverages	245,849	53,862	4,138	1,157	305,006	329,396
21 Beverages	5,704	95	25	1	5,825	5,112
22 Tobacco	64,087	42,829	1,398	469	108,783	109,893
23 Textiles	939,995	95,273	3,366	321	1,038,955	1,060,665
24 Footwear, other wearing apparels and made-up textile goods	9,167	279	30	15	9,491	13,048
25 Wood and cork except furniture	21,516	1,731	541	50	23,838	27,819
26 Furniture and fixtures	5,823	90	399	144	6,456	8,773
27 Paper and paper products	21,588	1,142	25	7	22,762	25,714
28 Printing, publishing and allied industries	68,208	231	569	191	69,199	76,309
29 Leather and leather products (except foot-wear)	11,463	340	341	67	12,211	19,247

30 Rubber and rubber products ...	21,698	473	89	...	22,260	24,759
31 Chemical and chemical products ...	61,048	9,487	1,133	1,565	73,233	88,004
32 Products of petroleum and coal ...	10,134	497	.	...	10,631	12,117
33 Non-metallic mineral products (except products of petroleum and coal)	82,407	16,417	2,588	1,064	102,476	97,243
34 Basic metal industries ...	83,791	6,359	178	28	90,356	98,059
35 Manufacture of metal products ...	54,399	800	336	331	55,866	62,432
36 Manufacture of machinery (except electrical machinery)	79,010	683	561	330	80,584	99,488
37 Electrical machinery apparatus, appliances and supplies	27,092	623	22	6	27,743	30,793
38 Transport equipment ...	179,949	484	1,495	23	181,951	225,297
39 Miscellaneous industries ...	34,803	2,908	250	128	38,089	130,265
51 Electricity, gas and steam ...	21,754	146	26	...	21,926	26,350
52 Water and sanitary services ...	4,387	52	2	...	4,441	5,368
83 Recreation services (Cinema studios).	4,779	29	6	3	4,817	3,986
84 Personal services (Job dyeing, dry cleaning, etc.)	13,967	229	141	27	14,364	15,040
Total	2,120,219	272,065	17,768	5,969	2,416,021 ¹	2,658,557

¹ Excluding figures for one factory in Coorg, for which the break-up is not available. It includes estimated data relating to factories in West Bengal, not submitting returns

After 1929 underground work for women was prohibited but the ban was lifted during the war and in 1945 the number of women workers underground reached a figure of 22,517. In 1946 it fell to 10,782 and since then there has been no underground work for women. In 1951 total women employed in open workings and on surface was 109,607 out of a total of 549,048 i.e., the percentage of women employed was 20. Larger number of women are employed in mines in Bihar (46,201) and Madhya Pradesh comes next (24,414). Though Bihar employs the largest number of women in mines the percentage of women to the total labour force is only 18.6 in that State. The percentage is highest in Madras being 34.0. The percentage is high in Orissa (33.7) and M. P. (32.1)

Women in Mining Industries

In the mining industry women form approximately one-fifth of the total force. In 1950 out of a total of 4,71,761 persons employed in mines 96,506 or 20.5 per cent were women. 59.5 per cent of the women employed in the mining industry are employed in coal mines, 16.6 per cent in manganese mines, 6.3 per cent in iron ore mines, 3.8 per cent in mica mines and the rest (i.e. 13.8 per cent.) in other mines. See table on page 100 for the employment figures.

Due to the ban imposed by Government on employment of women underground, women are at present employed in the open workings and on the surface only. On the surface most important occupation of women workers is wagon loading. In the manganese mines women are employed for loading of the tubs and wagons, dressing, sorting, picking, screening, raising, and selection of ores. In mica mines they are employed for the removal of muck and earth for the pit to the mouth.¹ In coal mining the more suitable jobs for women are sand loading, wagon loading, ash cleaning, pallet making, surface-trimming, carrying of brick, sanitary and conservancy work, shale picking on the mechanical loading, screening plant, etc.²

Women in Plantations

Plantations offer the largest employment to women workers. The reasons for the employment of women in such large numbers in plantations are: (1) the nature of work on plantations being more of an agricultural character requires little skill, (2) recruitment to plantations is on a family basis. The plantations were opened on virgin land far removed from settled villages and often at high altitudes on the hills. There local labour was not available and the planters had to depend on labour recruited from distant places. The planters naturally desired to have a more or less settled labour force and therefore they recruited entire families and provided

¹ B. P. Adarkar, *Labour Condition in Mica Mining and Mica Manufacturing Industry*, p. 7

² *Economic and Social Status of Women Workers in India*, p. 20.

The following table gives the employment of women labourers in different mining industries for 1952 and 1953 :—

EMPLOYMENT IN MINES 1952-53

Minerals	1952				1953				Total			
	Open workings		Surface		Open workings		Surface					
	Under-ground	Men	Women	Men	Women	Total	Under-ground	Men		Women		
Coal	1,82,762	22,353	11,298	92,080	40,170	3,48,663	1,81,491	21,583	11,078	89,307	37,734	3,41,193
Mica	21,744	7,821	2,059	6,507	2,913	41,044	19,473	6,209	1,400	5,621	2,168	34,871
Manganese	938	34,147	26,153	7,996	5,516	74,750	1,260	51,505	39,792	10,535	7,777	1,10,869
Iron ore	48	11,210	6,789	5,733	2,607	26,387	50	13,315	7,585	6,552	3,094	30,396
Gold	12,223	...	...	7,129	950	20,302	13,349	...	...	8,425	1,110	22,884
Limestone	...	7,185	4,794	2,014	473	14,466	...	9,029	5,239	2,516	764	17,548
Others	3,582	15,371	6,258	6,275	2,098	33,584	3,643	16,198	6,919	7,341	2,006	36,107
Total	2,21,297	98,087	57,351	1,27,734	54,727	5,59,196	2,19,266	1,17,839	72,013	1,30,097	54,653	5,93,868

living facilities to them so that the craving for home and hearth among the new recruits may not interfere with their attachment to the plantations. They promised to find work on the estate for women and children as well and this gave a further incentive for the labourers to emigrate to the plantations and lastly (3) the low wages prevailing in plantations necessitate that all members of the family including women and children should work.

Women are generally employed for plucking of leaf in tea estates and picking of berries in coffee estates. They are also engaged on weeding, forking and cheeling in tea, coffee and rubber plantations. Few women also do semi-skilled work as pruning in tea and tapping in rubber estates. In tea factories only the aged and infirm women are employed on picking out stalks, etc.

According to the estimates of the Labour Investigation Committee 44·7% of the total labour force in *Dooars*; 47·4% in the Tarai and 44·8% in the Darjeeling tea garden are adult women. In South India 47% of the total labour force in tea; 40% in coffee, and 24% in rubber estates are adult women. The following table gives the proportion of women employed in Assam tea plantations, only for which figures are available¹ :—

Year	Total No. of Adult Workers	No. of Women Workers	% of Women Workers
1933-34	5,37,723	2,50,347	46·6
1934-35	5,20,053	2,45,095	47·1
1935-36	5,80,717	2,70,387	46·6
1936-37	5,55,242	2,61,898	47·2
1937-38	5,58,128	2,63,280	47·2
1938-39	5,70,888	2,71,446	47·5
1939-40	5,64,452	2,69,480	47·7
1940-41	5,28,353	2,55,061	48·3
1941-42	5,59,790	2,70,168	48·3
1942-43	5,23,188	2,60,621	49·8
1943-44	4,99,184	2,49,813	50·0
1944-45	5,02,391	2,50,628	49·9
1945-46	5,02,387	2,38,201	47·4
1946-47	4,40,339	2,05,635	46·7
1947-48	4,48,568	2,11,012	47·0
1948-49	4,82,251	2,28,928	47·5
1949-50	4,8,1752	2,27,478	47·2
1950-51	5,20,919	2,47,587	47·9

¹ *Economic and Social Status of Women Workers in India*, p. 20, and *Indian Labour Year Book*, 1953.

Women in the Mica Industry

Factory legislation has no doubt improved the conditions of women and children in factory industries and mines. But there is a large body of women and children employed in mica, shellac and bidi factories and rice mills, the majority of whom do not come under the scope of Factories Act as the factories are small and do not use power or the work is carried on in the cottages. The wage level in the mica industry is probably the lowest in India with the exception perhaps of certain unregulated industries like shellac and bidi making. The question then naturally arises: Why then lakhs of labourers both women and children are working. The reasons are obvious. *Firstly*, the work is not strenuous and *secondly*, practically whole families of workers appear to be working either in factories or in their own homes.

Daily Earnings in Mica Mines

Occupation	1939			1944		
	Rs. a. p.			Rs. a. p.		
Unskilled coolie	...	0	6 0	0	9 0	
Hand driller	...	0	8 0	0	12 0	
Machine driller	..	0	13 0	1	2 0	
Shot firer	...	0	12 0	1	0 0	
Fireman	..	0	9 0	0	13 6	
Carpenters	...	0	12 0	1	8 0	
Females	...	0	5 0	0	7 6	

In spite of such meagre amount of wages, several kinds of abuses in payment are discernible. There are regular wage deductions on the following items :—(i) late attendance; (ii) false weightment and bad workmanship. Besides every worker earning more than one rupee in the week is required to contribute compulsorily one pice towards Goshala fund. On festive occasions like *Puja*, *Holi*, *Dewali* special deductions are made. In larger mines usually there are no complaints as regards payment, but in small mines invariably they get wages late some time even after a fortnight. Of course under the Minimum Wages Act 1948, minimum wage rate for workers have been fixed and they are Rs. 1-4-6 (factories) in Madras, Rs. 1-2-0 per day in Rajasthan and Rs. 45 per month in Ajmer.

Women in Bidi Industries

Another important industry which employs a considerable number of women is bidi-making which is widely spread in the towns of Bengal, Bihar and M. P. and is also concentrated in some rural areas in Chhota Nagpur. Attendance in these factories is irregular and the work seasonal. But when work proceeds the hours of work are excessive. Wages being on the piece work basis, the workers'

poverty and small earnings due to the low piece rate compel them to work for unduly long hours. The conditions of their working are unutterably loathsome and inhuman. The Royal Commission on Labour referring to Bidi Industries observes, "Every type of building is used but small shops preponderate and it is here that grave problems mainly arise and many of these places are small, airless boxes often without windows where the workers are crowded so thickly on the ground that there is hardly room to squeeze between them."

Women in the Rice Milling Industry

Another industry in which women are largely employed is rice milling which is carried on in Bengal, Bihar and Madras. Women are employed in drying process, spreading and turning the rice and also on occasions in removing the rice from the hullers to winnowing barn. They have to walk about for long hours under the hot sun in the courtyard which must be without cover for spreading and turning the rice by the feet or by means of ladle.

Lower Wages of Women

It must be noted that women labourers are paid less than male labourers not only in industrial occupations but also in agriculture. Why are women's wages generally speaking lower than those of men? The answer is not simple but complex. Among the major reasons why women's wages, as a whole and in particular cases, are lower than those paid to men, the following may be noted :—

- (i) Biological inferiority of the female and developed sense of subordination owing to the infusion of Hindu religious literature and the survival of ancient social ideas.
- (ii) Women workers enter in larger proportion, than men, those types of work in which all labour is paid less. They participate in the low wage industries. In part it is attributable to the fact that opportunities for women are more restricted than opportunities for men.
- (iii) Women workers have not generally found themselves in positions where they could bargain so effectively as their male competitors for several reasons. The mobility of women is not so great because they are more commonly restricted by family ties. Women are frequently interested in temporary employment only. Casual and part-time work is well handled by women after household duties and they are willing to work even on low wages to utilise their leisure.

- (iv) Women workers, as a whole, have much less industrial training and experience than men a fact that is inevitably reflected in their wages.

So far as women workers in Indian organised industries are concerned the principle of equal pay for equal work has not been accepted. In this connection it is noteworthy that according to recent award of an Adjudicator in Madras in relation to conditions of work and wages in the cotton mill industries in that State the same minimum wage, namely, Rs 26 per month plus dearness allowance according to fluctuations in the cost of living index numbers, has been recommended both for men and women and this recommendation has been implemented by the Madras Government.

Legislative Measures for the Protection and Welfare of Women Workers

Early measures adopted by the State for the protection of women workers were simple in character and were designed only to regulate the hours of work and employment. The establishment of the International Labour Organisation in 1919 influenced considerably the activities of the State in this field and at present laws are in force in India which not only regulate the hours of work but also contain provision for the health, safety and welfare of women workers. Most of these have been inspired by the Conventions and Recommendations adopted by the International Labour Organisation. The I. L. O. have so far adopted the following Conventions and Recommendations concerning women.

Conventions

1. Maternity Protection, 1919.
2. Night Work (women), 1919.
3. Night Work (women) (Revised), 1934.
4. Underground Work (women), 1935.
5. Night Work (women) (Revised), 1948.
6. Equal Remuneration, 1951.

Recommendations

1. Lead Poisoning (women and children), 1919.
2. Maternity Protection (Agriculture), 1921.
3. Night work of women (Agriculture), 1921.
4. Migration (Protection of Females at sea), 1926.
5. Equal Remuneration 1951.

Besides, measures adopted for the implementation of the I. L. O. Conventions, various other provisions have been made in Labour Acts for the protection and welfare of women workers. The following paragraphs describe briefly the main provisions concerning women contained in the various Labour Acts ;—

Recruitment. Except for the Tea plantations in Assam there is no restriction in India regarding recruitment of women. Under the Tea Districts Emigrant Labour Act, 1932, no married woman who is living with her husband can be assisted to proceed to Assam unless her husband gives his consent.

Employment. Employment of women is prohibited between 7 P. M. and 6 A. M. in factories, mines and plantations under the Factories Act 1948, the Mines Act 1952 and the Plantation Labour Act 1951. The State Government in the case of factories and the Central Government in case of mines are empowered to relax this restriction and to permit employment between 5 A. M. and 10 P. M.

Under the Factories Act the daily hours of work of adult workers have been fixed at 9. Though the Act permits men under certain circumstances, to work for more than 9 hours on any day it does not permit women to work beyond this limit. Section 46 of the Mines Act prohibits employment of women below ground in mines.

The maximum permissible hours of work for men and women are 48 per week in factories and mines and 54 in plantations. The daily spread-over of working hours has been limited to 10½ hrs. in factories and 12 hrs. for surface work in mines. The Acts provide that no adult worker—whether man or woman—employed in factories, plantations and in mines shall be allowed to work for more than 5 hours at a stretch without a rest pause of at least half an hour.

In rice milling, vegetable oil and cement industries, the average daily number of hours worked by women are less than 8 while in eight other industries, as given below, it varies from 8 to 9 :—

AVERAGE DAILY NUMBER OF HOURS WORKED IN 1948

Industry	Men	Women
Cotton	8.3	8.0
Jute	8.1	8.1
Rice Milling	8.0	7.9
Vegetable Oil	9.5	7.7
Cement	7.9	6.3
Glass	9.0	9.0
Ceramics	8.6	8.8
Paper	8.8	8.6
Matches	8.8	8.3
Chemicals	8.1	8.6
General and Electrical Engineering	3.1	8.7

The following table shows the average weekly number of hours worked by men and women in various mines in 1951 :—

AVERAGE WEEKLY NO. OF HOURS WORKED IN MINES, 1951.¹

	Open Working		Surface	
	Men	Women	Men	Women
Coal :				
Jharia	46	45	46	47
Raniganj	47	47	47	47
Mica:				
Bihar	48	48	48	47
Madras	48	47	48	48
Manganese :				
Madhya Pradesh	45	44	45	48
Iron Ore :				
Bihar	48	47	48	48
Gold :				
Mysore	..	...	48	48

On the Plantations women generally work for 7 hrs. in the North and 8 hrs. in the South. In Assam and Bengal women generally work for larger hours than men on plantations. While men who are employed mainly on cultivation finish their allotted task in about 4-5 hours, women who work on plucking leaf on piece rates of wages have to work for 7-8 hours a day. In South men and women both work the same hours, namely, 8 a day

Health and Safety. To safeguard women against the dangers arising out of lifting of heavy weights both the Factories Act and Mines Act authorise the appropriate Government to fix the maximum load that may be lifted by women. Rules framed by all the State Governments (except U. P.) have fixed the following maximum weights for women employed in Factories —

Adult females	65 lbs.
Adolescent females	45 lbs.
Female children	30 lbs.

However, under the U. P. Factories Rules the following weights have been fixed —

Category	For Intermittent work	For continuous work
Adult Females	66 lbs.	44 lbs.
Adolescent females	50 "	33 "
Female Child	30 "	20 "

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 48.

Dangerous Operations. Section 87 of the Factories Act empowers State Governments to prohibit employment of women in dangerous operations. Similarly under section 57 (j) of the Mines Act the Central Government are empowered to make regulations for prohibiting, restricting or regulating the employment of women in mines or in any class of mines or in particular kinds of labour which are attended by danger to the life, safety or health of women workers. The Factories Act prohibits employment of women for pressing cotton in any part of the factory in which cotton opener is at work. Women, however, can be employed on the side of feed end if the feed end is in one room and the delivery end is in another and there is partition wall.

Bathing and Washing Facilities etc. The Acts regulating the employment of workers in mines, plantations, and factories lay down that the employment shall provide separate urinals and latrines for the use of women under the Factories Act. It is necessary for employers to provide separate washing facilities for women. The Mines Act empowers the Central Government to make rule for requiring employers to maintain at or near the pit heads bathing places equipped with shower baths and locker-rooms separately for men and women.

Maternity benefits. The tabular statement on page 108 shows the qualifying period, the period of benefit and the rate of benefit in the different States and under the Mines Maternity Benefit Act:¹

Additional Benefit

Only four Acts, namely, the Mines Maternity Benefit Act and the Assam, Bihar and U. P. Acts provide for some additional benefits which take the form of free medical treatment, maternity bonus provision of creches, additional rest intervals, etc. Of these, the Assam Act merely provides for free medical aid during the period of confinement. The Mines Maternity Benefit Act provides for the payment of bonus not exceeding Rs 3 to women but the obligation to pay the bonus does not arise in the case of those employers who provide free services of a qualified midwife or other trained persons. In Rajasthan, women workers are entitled to a bonus of Rs. 5 if they avail themselves of the services of a qualified midwife or a trained woman health visitor at the time of their confinement. Both in Bihar and U. P., bonus payable in such circumstances is Rs. 3. These two Acts also provide that if a woman worker employed in a factory as a child of less than one year of age she shall be entitled to two intervals for rest of half an hour each—one in the forenoon and the other in the afternoon—at such times as she thinks fit, in addition to the usual interval of one hour allowed by the Factories Act. However, if the employer maintains a creche at the factory, two additional intervals to which the woman worker is entitled will be

¹ *Indian Labour Year Book*, 1953-54 (1956), pp. 111-112.

BENEFITS UNDER THE MATERNITY BENEFIT ACTS

Name of Act	Qualifying period	Period of benefit (weeks)	Amount of benefit
1	2	3	4
1 Assam Maternity Benefit Act, 1944.	150 days' service during the period of 12 months immediately preceding the date of notice.	8 for women employed in factories For plantations 12	Plantation— Re 0-11-6 per day in addition to usual food concession
	Nil in the case of immigrant women if pregnant at the time of arrival in Assam.		Other Industries—Average weekly earnings subject to a minimum of Rs 2 per week.
2. Bhopal State Maternity Benefit Act, 1943	9 months' service preceding the date of notice	8	Average daily wage or annas eight whichever is less
3. Bihar Maternity Benefit Act, 1947.	6 months' service preceding the date of notice.	8	Average daily earnings or As 8 per day whichever is greater
4. Bombay Maternity Benefit Act, 1929.	9 months' service preceding the date of notice	8	As 8 per day in the cities of Bombay and Ahmedabad and elsewhere at the rate of average daily earnings or As 8 per day whichever is less
5. Central Provinces Maternity Benefit Act, 1930.	Do	8	Average daily earnings or As 8 per day whichever is less
6. Hyderabad Maternity Benefit Act, 1940.	9 months' service preceding the date of notice	12	As. 12 per day.
7. Madras Maternity Benefit Act, 1934	240 days' service during the period of one year immediately preceding the date of notice.	7	As. 8 per day.
8. Orissa Maternity Benefit Act, 1953	6 months' service preceding the date of notice.	7	Actual daily wage salary subject to minimum of As. 12, day.

1	2	3	4
9. Punjab Maternity Benefit Act, 1913.	9 months' service preceding the date of delivery.	84 days	Average daily earnings or As 12 per day whichever is greater.
10. Rajasthan Maternity Benefit Act, 1953	7 months' service preceding the date of notice.	8	Average daily earnings or As 12 per day whichever is greater
11. Travancore-Cochin Maternity Benefit Act, 1952.	150 days' service during the 12 months immediately preceding the date of notice.	12	Rs 5-4-0 per week. ¹
12. U. P. Maternity Benefit Act, 1938.	6 months' service preceding the date of notice	8	Average daily earnings or As 8 per day whichever is greater.
13. (a) Bengal Maternity Benefit Act, 1939.	9 months' service preceding the day of delivery	8	Average daily earnings or As 8 per day whichever is greater.
(b) West Bengal Maternity Benefit (Tea Estates) Act, 1948.	150 days' employment in the 12 months immediately preceding the expected day of delivery.	12	Rs 5-4-0 per week (wholly in cash or partly in cash and partly in kind).
14. Mysore Maternity Benefit Regulation, 1937.	9 months' service preceding the date of notice.	8	Average daily wage or As. 8 per day whichever is less.
15. Mines Maternity Benefit Act, 1941.	6 months' service preceding the day of delivery.	8	As 12 per day.

of a quarter of an hour each. The Bihar and U. P. Acts further provide that every employer, in whose factory fifty or more women are employed or where not less than 25 per cent of the workers employed are women and the number of such women is not less than ten, shall set apart a room in the factory premises for use as a creche for the children of women employed in the factory; he shall also employ a female attendant thereat to look after such children. In case of miscarriage the U. P. and Rajasthan Acts provide for three weeks' leave with pay from the day of miscarriage. By virtue of

¹ If prior to the commencement of the Act any employer was paying benefit at a higher rate, the Act provides that in that case women employed by such employer will be entitled to benefit at the prevailing higher rate

Note.—As a result of the decision reached at the Tripartite Conference held at Delhi in January, 1947 the United Planters' Association of Southern India made the following recommendations in respect of South Indian Plantations:—

Rate of benefit—As. 12 per day including the value of food concessions.

Period of benefit—8 weeks.

These recommendations took effect from 15th February 1947,

an amending Act passed by the Government of the Punjab women workers in that State are now entitled to maternity benefit in case of miscarriage and abortion also. Benefit in such cases is payable for a period of 42 days if the worker concerned had at least 6 months' service to her credit."

Safeguards and Penalties

"Provision exists in the Acts for protection of women against dismissal by the employers to avoid liability of payment. A women worker cannot be discharged during the period of maternity leave. Employment of women during maternity leave is a penal offence but the Assam Act permits such employment provided it is on light work during the four weeks preceding the date of childbirth. Similarly, the West Bengal Maternity Benefit (Tea Estates) Act permits employment of women on light work during the six weeks before confinement if certified fit to do such work by the prescribed medical practitioner."

Administration of the Acts

The administration of the Acts in all the States is the responsibility of the Factory Inspectorates. The Mines Maternity Benefit Act is administered by the Coal Mines Welfare Commissioner so far as coal mines are concerned. In other mines its enforcement is the responsibility of the Chief Inspector of Mines. Rules framed under these Acts require employers to furnish annual returns showing the number of claims made, the number of claims paid and the total amount of benefit paid during the year. The information contained in these returns is analysed by the Chief Inspector of Factories in the various States and published in annual reports. The table on p. 109 gives details regarding maternity benefit paid during 1953 in some of the States and in mines.

Conclusion

A survey of the regulated factories and unregulated factories where women labour is employed must have convinced the reader that much remains to be done for the women workers. According to Dr. Radhakamal Mukerjee, "In respect of the conditions of employment of women and children in industry India lags far behind the standard of welfare adopted by most industrial countries in the world. Excessive child labour in unregulated factories, 'sweating' of women and a general unconcern with the fate of human factors in production of quick and unconsciously large profits are blots that demand early removal by labour legislators and governmental labour services, especially as the old traditions of hospitality and care for dependents are fast disappearing in all forms of employment in India."

Industrial labour in India is pushed and not pulled to urban areas, as it happens in western countries. It is a commonplace observation that man becomes efficient and creative in relation to

**MATERNITY BENEFIT PAID IN DIFFERENT STATES AND IN MINES DURING
THE YEAR 1953**

State	Average No. of women employed	No. of women who claimed maternity benefit	No. of women who were paid maternity benefit in full or in part	No. of cases in which a bonus was given or maternity benefit was paid for miscarriage or death	Total amount paid
					Rs
Andhra	37,049	181	174		4,466
Assam	1,92,873	41,304	40,258	63	23,44,197
Bihar	10,215	916	916		81,553
Bombay	40,487	3,367	2,971	19	1,30,302
Madhya Pradesh	18,629	384	360		18,266
Madras	50,615	3,843	3,691	315	1,45,750
Punjab	1,972	14	13		687
Uttar Pradesh	1,319	77	75	13	5,639
West Bengal	82,083	13,676	12,547	2	9,09,324
Total—1953	4,35,242	63,762	61,005	412	36,40,184
1952	5,00,314	70,973	68,049	73	39,13,464
Hyderabad	8,116	406	390		30,935
Mysore [*]	9,752	369	369		29,173
Travancore-Cochin	37,334	3,956	3,352		1,56,015
Total—1953	55,202	4,731	4,111		2,16,123
1952	21,991	2,222	2,053		1,01,936
Ajmer	961	22	21		376
Bhopal	244	2	2		157
Delhi	631				
Total—1953	1,836	24	23		533
1952	3,069	371	362		4,938
<i>Mines</i>					
Coal	50,046	4,584	4,024	956	1,76,064
Others	77,854	4,526	4,684	305	1,79,577
Total—1953	1,27,900	9,110	8,708	1,261	3,55,641
1952	98,209	9,554	9,106	1,114	3,63,343

* Information relates to the year 1953-54

a situation only when he puts his heart into it. Generally women workers regard factory life as a temporary camping ground. In order to have permanent industrial labour this is necessary that the problem of women labour must be tackled properly. As long as we do not have proper housing facilities, where women labourers can stay (and if married with their husbands), the atmosphere is bound to smell of debauchery, prostitution, gambling and drinks. So long as a worker's wife and children continue to live in the villages his heart too will be there. Not any amount of persuasion but only the hard necessity of earning livelihood can make him stay in the mill. The housing conditions in urban areas are deplorable. Deep in the background of these slums the flames are spreading. We need no labour leaders or Bolshevik teaching from outside to fan these flames into a rebellious conflagration. It is high time when the capitalists should realise their social responsibilities. The need for providing decent houses to the workers and their families must be regarded as a first charge on the industry which has to bear even a part of its cost. The crowded tenements make no proper provision for the separation of which is according to accepted civilised standards essential to decency. Industrialism is advancing rapidly in the country and the vast human material which is so ruthlessly exploited demands immediate attention. It is necessary therefore that facilities to have a normal home life at the mill is offered to him. The village offers a free ancestral home and cheap living to the worker's family. It will be very nice if factory can also offer him facilities to set up a home in the factory area. Many experiments have been made in Great Britain and America on different problems of running cheap and efficient homes in industrial areas. Many factories in the West have popularised schemes of cheap and efficient home for workers. It is time when we Indians should also give a trial to similar schemes.

Another scheme worth trying is the scheme of Industrial Home Work. Industrial Home Work is the name given to a variety of operation in which partially completed articles or raw materials are sent into the homes of workers to be finished there. There are certain industries in which the women prepare the parts at home and the assembling of the part is done at a central place and the payment is made on the basis of the amount of work done. Industries of this kind for women labourers must be planned in mill areas to enable the women folk of the workers to augment the earning of the family. Any plan for the industrialisation of India has to recognise this fact particularly if women have to play their role in industrialised India.

India is a poor country where ignorance, squalor, and disease are the constant companion of the bulk of the masses. To the poorer sections of the people, who form approximately seven-tenths

of the population, where earning is a terrible economic necessity women must add to meagre family life. Women's life, as we have seen, in regulated and unregulated factories becomes one round of drudgery from morning to the night, for, besides her work, she has to attend to her household duties. This leaves no scope of individual development with the result that her mental growth becomes stunted and her outlook conservative. Not only this but repeated child-births also make her physically wreek. Maternal mortality is very heavy in India. Though there is legislation for maternity benefit, yet quite a number of women do not get their benefits because of their ignorance, economic helplessness and the unscrupulousness of the small employers. Moreover, many women who work in agriculture and non-regulating factories do not come under this Act at all. Anti-natal, post-natal as well as intra-natal care

CHAPTER VI CHILD LABOUR IN INDIA

Social Aspects of the Problem

The problem of child labour has numerous aspects and child labour is regarded as a current problem because of its social as well as its economic implications. The most frequently cited social problem arising out of child labour includes the facts that :

“Child labour is directly related to child health and exerts a negative effect upon it. It tends to interfere with the normal family life and to encourage the breakdown of the social control that is largely depended upon to preserve the existing social order, it seriously interferes with education and thus precludes the most productive participation in the privileges and obligations of citizenship.”

The effects exerted by child labour upon health are clearly evidenced in numerous studies in foreign countries which have discovered evidence of this relationship. In New York a study of news-boys showed 17% of them being afflicted with flat feet as compared with 6% so affected among all school children. Secondly, studies by the Children's Bureau of the surroundings of both urban and rural child workers have disclosed, however, that their environments are particularly conducive to roughness, crudeness, harshness and in many cases to actual delinquency. The removal of the child from the home and the partial independence secured by an independent earning power tend to create a lack of respect for normal controls at a time when these future citizens most need social regulation.

Economic Problem of Child Labour

The whole question of the propriety of child labour is frequently discussed as though it involved social problems only. Actually, however, many of the problems created by working children are economic in nature. Child labour involves the use of labour at its point of lowest productivity and is therefore an inefficient utilisation of labour power. It frequently precludes the most productive adulthood by distributing child workers in blind alley occupations thereby causing economic loss to society. Child workers are necessarily handicapped by limitations of physical strength and experience so that they are not so productive as the adults. If their employment had no effect upon their productivity in later life, this fact would lose much of its economic significance. But this is not the case. Education which young people forego in order to work might in many cases result in greatly increased productivity in adulthood. From the standpoint of society, schooling represents a saving, a deferring of benefits, which like individual investment often pays worthwhile dividends. Child worker represents premature expenditure rather

than savings. The conservation is economically important to society in somewhat the same way as the conservation of oil, lumber or other natural resources. Education in a sense represents a sort of social savings and investment. It pays its returns in the enhanced social and economic value of future citizens.

Child Labour and its Importance in India

During recent years the question of industrial labour and its working and living conditions is attracting increasing attention. This is as it should be because India is rapidly mobilising its resources and it will not be very far before it ranks as one of the leading industrial countries of the world. Industrial labour is a force to be reckoned with.

Times without number we are told that "the children are the citizens of tomorrow," "the child is the father of man" and "today's children are the nation-builders of tomorrow", etc. India has been made to feed and to grow fat on empty political cants such as above. But the age of slogans is fast disappearing. We will have to face the Reality. Bernard Shaw has wisely remarked: "Reality is pretty, brutal pretty, filthy when one comes in grip with it." A glance at child labour in India will convince us that child labour is underpaid, brutally exploited—physically and mentally—and entirely deprived of all opportunities for education. It is the duty of our National Government to eradicate not merely the evils of child labour but the child labour itself. Miss Cama was correct when she said about child labour that, "it is economically unsound, psychologically disastrous and physically as well as morally dangerous and harmful." The evils of premature labour and premature exploitation must be wiped out of India if the country is to survive as a strong, healthy and powerful nation. Educationists and psychologists will tell us that work is essential for the normal growth of the child as it develops initiative and self-sufficiency and is preparation for later self-support, independence and freedom, but when this healthy development of function to work is substituted by the economic function of wage earning we have the socially pathological conditions of child labour.

Indian Factory Legislation and Child Labour

As far as factory legislation goes there is some progress visible. The history of labour organisation for the protection of child labour is the history of gradual realisation on the part of legislative authorities of the evils of the child labour. A brief sketch of factory legislation with regard to child labour clearly shows that since the year 1881 every change has tended to increase the minimum age limit of the child labour and decrease his maximum hours of work. By employment of Children's Act of 1939, which is an all India legislation, the occupiers below the age of 14 is prohibited. Children under 15 in occupation connected with railways, transport and handling of goods are prohibited for employment.

A considerable amount of child labour was employed in India particularly in cotton and jute mills. Between 1891 and 1923 the number of children employed in factories increased from 18,880 to 74,290—an increase of 295%. The percentage of children to total number of workers employed in factories, however, had already begun declining in 1923 and between 1923 to 1952 the decline was not only relative but also absolute as is shown by the following figures :—

EMPLOYMENT OF CHILDREN IN FACTORIES

Year	Number of children employed	Per cent of children to total number of workers
1892	18,888	5.9
1912	53,700	6.2
1923	74,220	5.3
1933	19,091	1.4
1939	9,403	0.5
1943	12,484	0.5
1948	11,444	0.48
1950	7,764	0.31
1951	6,853	0.27
1952	6,149	0.25

Extent of Child Labour

1. **In Organised Factories.** The table on page 117 shows the number of adolescents and children employed during 1952 in factories under the Factories Act in the Part A and certain Part C States. Among adolescents, males form about 84 per cent of the total number employed but among children boys form only about 74 per cent. Social customs such as early marriages for girls and the reluctance of parents to send girls of marriageable age to work in factories probably account for the smaller proportion of adolescent females employed in factories. Madras accounts for the largest number of adolescents and children employed in factories. Assam, Bihar, Bombay and West Bengal also employ adolescents in large numbers. Child labour is thus applicable only in Madras, Assam, Bihar and West Bengal.

The industrial groups responsible for the employment of child labour in large numbers are chemicals and chemical products, food except beverage, non-metallic mineral products and tobacco. If one were to make a deeper examination it will be seen that match factories in chemical group, tea factories in food group, mica factories in mineral products and bidi manufacture in tobacco are the villains of the piece in regard to the employment of children. The following table gives these facts.

NUMBER OF ADOLESCENTS AND CHILDREN EMPLOYED IN FACTORIES
DURING 1952 BY STATES

State	Adolescents		Children		Total
	Males	Females	Boys	Girls	
Assam ...	2,400	142	868	37	3,456
Bihar ...	1,560	342	743	67	2,712
Bombay ...	3,611	234	191	54	4,090
Madhya Pradesh ...	38	81	75	30	573
Madras ...	3,478	1,755	1,716	1,396	8,345
Orissa ...	442	148	9	...	585
Punjab ...	337	1	247	...	599
Uttar Pradesh ...	462	...	131	1	594
West Bengal ...	2,207	123	399	38	2,767
Ajmer ...	253	...	...	...	253
Coorg ...	...	...	...	...	...
Delhi ...	153	4	154	3	314
Andaman and Nicobar Island	33	...	...	...	33
Total ...	15,332	2,830	4,533	1,626	24,321

NUMBER OF ADOLESCENTS AND CHILDREN EMPLOYED IN FACTORIES
DURING 1952 BY INDUSTRY

Industry	Adolescents		Children		Total
	Males	Females	Boys	Girls	
1. Processes allied to agriculture (gins- and processes)	74	35	23	19	151
2. Food except beverages.	3,359	796	974	188	5,317
3. Beverages	25	19	1	...	45
4. Tobacco	1,099	323	367	109	1,898
5. Textiles	3,278	148	308	32	3,766
6. Foot-wear	30	2	19	...	51
7. Wood and cork except furniture.	445	96	37	13	591
8. Furniture and Fixtures.	264	135	144	1	544

9. Paper and Paper products	25	...	6	1	32	
10. Printing, Publishing and allied industries	617	2	215	...	834	
11. Leather and leather products except foot-wear.	329	14	67	...	410	
12. Rubber and rubber products	89	4	...	...	93
13. Chemicals and chemical products	384	771	488	1,095	2,738	
14. Products of petroleum and Coal	1	...	...	...	1
15. Non-metallic mineral products except products of petroleum and coal	2,178	448	943	143	3,712	
16. Basic metal industries	177	1	28	...	206	
17. Metal products except machinery and transport equipment	373	7	348	1	729	
18. Machinery except electrical machinery	561	...	333	...	894	
19. Electrical machinery, apparatus, appliances and supplies	22	...	6	...	28	
20. Transport equipment	1,495	...	24	...	1,519	
21. Miscellaneous industries	265	25	148	24	462	
22. Electricity gas and steam	26	...	...	...	26
23. Water and sanitary services	2	...	...	...	2
24. Recreation services (cinema studios)	6	...	3	...	9	
25. Personal services (laundries, dyeing and cleaning)	280	4	51	...	263	
Total	...	15,332	2,830	4,533	1,626	24,321

At present, in organised factory industries child labour is not a serious problem. It is, however, doubtful if statistics compiled from the returns under the Factories Acts tell the whole story regarding child labour. For it is well within the experience of factory inspectors as well as other officers engaged on field enquiries that no sooner they make their appearance on the scene than quite a large number of children run away from the factory premises. These are children often below the age of employment. In this connection the Labour Investigation Committee remarks, "It must be remembered that the concerns supplying figures are more law-abiding than some of the others and also that employment of children is almost always clandestine... The important fact that has emerged from the investigation is that in various industries mainly smaller industries, the prohibition of the employment of children is disregarded quite openly and owing to the inadequacy of the inspection staff it has become difficult to enforce the relevant provisions of the law."¹

2. Child Labour in Unregulated Factories

The problem, however, arises as regards unregulated factories. Our country is not only a principally rural country but also a land of innumerable small trade industries and trades and crafts without machinery or power employing a large number of workers. Among these unregulated factories are included *Bidi* making, tanning, carpet manufacture, wool cleaning, mica, shellac factories, manufacture of bangles and a host of other unspecified industries. Thus by far the larger majority of children are employed in these industries, and they do not by any chance come under the control of legislation. The conditions of their working are intolerably loathsome and undesirably inhuman. The Royal Commission on Labour referring to *bidi* industries observed, "Every type of the building is used but small workshops preponderate and it is here that gravest problems mainly arise and many of these places are crowded so thickly on the ground that there is barely room to squeeze between them." The lack of ventilation impairs health and the lack of height gives the child labour a stoop. Children are in great demand in *bidi* factories as their supple fingers are best suited for rolling the dry leaves into *bidi*. Small children even as young as 5 to 7 years of age work from 10 to 12 hours. Employment of children has appreciably gone down since the Report of the Royal Commission and this is admitted by the union leaders in M. P. and Bombay. As many as 5,00,000 workers are estimated to be employed in India in the manufacture of *bidis* and assuming that children constitute an average of 5 per cent of the total number of workers, the number of children employed in the manufacture of *bidis* alone should be as high as 25,000.

According to the Rege Commission Report the piece of legislation is, however, disregarded in South India, Bengal and in some

parts of Bombay State. Workers bring their own or their neighbours' children to help them in cutting leaves and tying thread on the bidis etc. and pay them a pittance of a few annas per day. They are not, of course, shown on the register and they make themselves scarce as soon as the Inspector comes to the factory.

Another special feature is that sometimes they are bartered by the parents or guardians (at stipulated amounts a month) in return for a loan. So also in carpet factories at Amritsar and other places and in other industries in the North and South where a considerable number of children under 12 years of age are employed, the practice of pledging the child labour is quite common.

During 1953 the Labour Bureau conducted a rapid *ad hoc* enquiry into labour conditions in the cashewnut processing industry and the enquiries revealed that a large number of children was being employed in cashewnut processing in Madras and Travancore-Cochin. In Madras 4.7 per cent and in Travancore-Cochin 13.2 per cent of the total force were children.

This widespread evil of mortgaging the labour of children in several parts of India has been condemned in no uncertain terms. According to the Royal Commission, "This system is indefensible; it is worse than the system of indentured labour, for the indentured labour is when he enters the contract, a free agent, while the child is not". The Government was right when it came out with the Children (Pledging of Labour) Act of 1933. This act made void any arrangement to pledge the labour of a child under 15 and made both the contracting parties liable to a fine. It is very unfortunate that this act is practically a dead-letter as nothing is done to enforce it and the pledging of children labour continues to be as prevalent and passes as unnoticed as before the enactment of this piece of legislation. According to Rege Committee this evil of pledging child labour exists in Bidi industry in South India and Mysore State only and probably it is due to the extreme poverty of the workers. Till 1st April 1951, the Act applied to only some of the States of India. By virtue of the enactment of the Part B States (Laws) Act 1951, it now applies to whole of India except the State of Jammu and Kashmir.

Mica, shellac, toy-making, paper-flower-making and wool cleaning are some of the other unregulated industries where children are exploited in the most shameful manner on large scale. About 30% of the workers in mica factories and 10% of the total workers in shellac factories in India are children. The industries being almost entirely out of legal control, little children between 6 to 10 years of age, are employed without either age or physical fitness certificate in splitting and cutting mica. As regards the workshops engaged in the manufacture of mica, the Labour Investigation Committee records that the employment of children is prevalent

on an amazingly wide scale in open defiance of law and the Committee states with surprise that child labour was employed.

Even at the Government factory at Pachamba in Bihar, children under 12 years of age are employed mainly in the sorting and splitting of small size mica, in sickle dressing mica and in screening the loose, splittings of mica, to remove the extremely small pieces, the percentage of children under 12 to the total number of workers being as high as 50 in the last named process.

Another typical workshop industry in which production is carried on by hand process and where children are required is the making of glass bangles. The most important centre of this industry in India today is Ferozabad which employs as many as 6,000 workers in bangle making shops and according to Labour Investigation Committee even on conservative estimate at least 35% of this total are children below 12.

According to the Labour Investigation Committee in the most of the glass factories the basic materials for the batch *viz.*, silica, soda ash, calcium oxide, borax, saltpetre etc., are mixed by workers in closed rooms and the workers are provided with neither dirt respirators nor goggles nor hand-gloves. Again there is almost no arrangement for the control of temperature and the results are particularly disastrous in the glass and shellac factories where children of tender age often have to work near open furnaces in the extreme heat of North India and cases of fainting are most uncommon. In the glass factories small pieces of glass are scattered over the entire compound and red-hot electric wire is sometimes employed to act the tubings; but the children are supplied neither wooden sandals nor gloves and are often found to work with burns and cuts in their bodies. Again according to the Rege Committee's Report on labour conditions, "In the glass industries it is almost impossible to describe sufficiently and accurately the wretched conditions in which labourers work." No wonder the children in the glass industry look "emaciated, anaemic, myopic, and gloomy and invariably suffer from rickets and eye diseases."¹

There does not appear to be any considerable employment of child labour in municipalities and public works. Central public works, however, reported in 1952 the number of child workers directly employed at 1151 and employed through contractors at 3628. At a conference of Government Contractors held, the Union Ministry of Works, Housing and Supply, it was agreed the children below 14 were not to be employed hereafter. Incidentally, in some of the river valley projects, child labour seems to be prevalent to a limited extent.

¹ *Ibid*, pp 144-145.

3. Child Labour in Mines

Children formed a large part of the mining labour force in the early years of the industry. In 1901 there were as many as 5147 children below 12 years of age constituting 4·9 per cent of the total labour force in mines. The Mines Act of 1901 empowered the Chief Inspector of Mines to prohibit the employment of children below 12 in mines but this did not effectively check the employment of children in mines and in 1921 children below 12 still formed 3·5 per cent of the total labour force in mines. The Indian Mines Act 1923, prohibited the employment of children below 13 in mines but in 1926 children below 12 still constituted about 1·6 per cent of the labour force in mines. In 1935 the minimum age of employment of children was raised to 15. Persons between the age of 15 and 17 could not be employed as adults or allowed to work underground unless they were certified medically fit to work as adults. In their main report the Labour Investigation Committee has remarked, "In contravention of the provisions of the Acts regarding the employment of women and children, both women and children appear to be employed under-ground in mica mines. Both these sections (relating to employment of children below 15 and young persons between 15 and 17 underground) are infringed. Workers collude with the employers in the employment of women and children in order to augment their family income as their own wages are basically low."¹ In the Report of Labour Conditions in the Iron Ore Industry the Committee observes as follows, "In particular mines employment of children under 15 in contravention of the law is frequent."² Although no figures are available, children are employed even in coal mines. According to the Family Budget enquiries, conducted in coal mining areas the earning strength of an average worker's family in Jharia was 2·02 and in Raniganj 1·38 consisting of 1·15 adult males, 0·73 adult females and 0·14 children in Jharia and 1·11 adult males, 0·19 adult females and 0·08 children in Raniganj.³

The following table gives the employment of women and child-labour in mines during 1901-1950:—

WOMEN AND CHILD LABOUR IN MINES, 1901-1950

Year	Men	Percent	Women	Percent	Children	Percent	Total
1901	69,025	65·9	30,488	29·2	5,147	4·9	104,660
1924	161,402	63·7	87,434	33·8	6381	2·5	258,217
1926	181,616	69·8	78,497	30·2	...	...	260,113
1933	171,038	82·8	35,469	17·2	...	...	206,507
1936	226,958	84·2	42,635	15·8	...	...	269,593
1939	254,898	84·0	50,346	16·0	...	...	305,244
1947	316,013	78·0	91,250	22·0	...	...	407,263
1950	375,255	80·0	96,500	20·0	...	...	471,756

¹ Report p. 62.

² B P Atkar Report on Labour Conditions in the Iron Ore Industry, p. 25.

³ S. R. Deshpande, Report on an Inquiry into Conditions of Labour in the Coal Mining Industry,

The Mines Act of 1952, prohibited the presence of children in any part of a mine which is below ground or in any open excavation in which mining operation is being carried on. Persons between the age of 15 and 18 are to be deemed to be adolescents. They cannot be employed below ground unless (i) they are certified to be medically fit to work as adults by a certifying surgeon; (ii) they carry a token to that effect while at work; and (iii) they are given an interval for rest of at least half an hour after every 4½ hours of continuous work on any day.

4. Child Labour in Plantations

In the annual report of the working of the Tea District Emigrant Labour Act the Controller of Emigrant Labour gives statistics of employment of children in Assam tea garden. The following table gives the number of men, women and children employed in tea gardens in Assam in recent years.

CHILD LABOUR IN ASSAM TEA GARDENS

Year	Settled Labour			Percentage of children to total	Basti Labour			Per centage of children to labour
	Men	Women	Children		Men	Women	Children	
1944-45	2,33,279	2,25,634	86,635	15.9	18,484	24,994	9,025	17.2
1945-46	2,36,931	2,05,891	83,747	15.9	27,255	32,310	11,248	15.9
1946-47	2,10,150	1,76,093	66,955	14.8	24,554	29,542	9,711	15.2
1947-48	2,11,758	1,81,484	70,878	15.3	25,708	29,528	8,925	13.9
1948-49	2,23,657	1,96,177	60,537	12.6	29,666	32,751	7,981	11.3
1949-50	2,25,929	1,90,325	67,103	13.9	28,345	37,153	8,593	11.6
1950-51	2,37,268	2,04,449	73,776	14.3	36,064	43,138	9,198	10.4

Quite a large proportion of the children employed on the plantations are between ages of 12 and 14. According to the results of the *ad hoc* enquiry conducted in Assam in 1951 roughly 54 per cent of the children employed in European-owned estates and 63 per cent of those employed in Indian-owned states were between the ages of 12 and 14.¹

No doubt the large increase in the proportion of child labour in the tea plantation is as undesirable as the readmittance of woman labour underground in the mines. The right method of counteracting the shortage of labour in both cases is the improvement of wage level and of health and housing standards along with other amenities for the workers. At present the children in the tea plantations earn about Rs. 4 to 5 per month. Here regular employment is available unlike factories and mines.

¹ Labour Bureau, *Plantation Labour in Assam Valley*.

Legislative Protection for Children and Young Workers

In India, as in other industrial countries including those in the West, it was from attempts to provide legal protection for children, the wage earners least able to defend themselves, that the present structure of labour legislation was developed. Extended first to women workers, labour legislation now covers all workers and is based on the conviction that it is one of the principal duties of the State to guard and promote the well-being of its citizens¹

The first Factories Act in India was passed in 1881. It defined a child as "any person below 12 and prohibited the employment of children below 7." The hours of work of children between the ages of 7 and 12 were fixed at 9 per day. Provision was also made for rest intervals and holidays. The Act of 1891 raised the minimum age of employment of children to 9 and restricted the hours of work of children between 9 and 14 to a maximum of 7 hours a day. The minimum age of employment was raised to 12 in 1922 and to 14 in 1948.

The Directive Principles of State policy embodied in the Constitution of India reaffirm the policy of protection of children against exploitation. "The State shall, in particular, direct its policy towards securing that the health and strength of workers, men and women and the tender age of children are not abused and that citizens are not forced by economic necessity to enter a vocation unsuited to their age or strength; that childhood and youth are protected against exploitation and against moral and material abandonment."

The Plantation Labour Act, 1951 prescribes the minimum age for the employment of children at 12. The employment of children Act 1938 as amended in 1951 prohibits the employment of children between the ages 15 and 17 in any occupation connected with the transport of passengers, goods or mails by railway. It also prohibits the employment of children below 14 in workshops connected with Bidi making, carpet weaving, cement manufacture (including the bagging of cement), cloth printing, dyeing and weaving, manufacture of matches, explosives and fire works, mica cutting and splitting shellac manufacture, soap manufacture, tanning and wool cleaning.

Hours of Work

The Factories Act prescribes a working day of 4½ hours with a spread over of 5 hours for children and adolescents. Employment during night of children and young persons who have not completed 17 years of age is prohibited. The mines Act 1952 lays down that no adolescents shall be employed above ground or in any workshop or power station in a mine or in any open cast workings in a mine.

¹ Development of Labour Legislation on Young Workers, *International Labour Review* December 1953 p 543.

for more than 4½ hours in any day or between the hours of 6 P. M. and 6 A. M. The Plantation Labour Act 1951 has prescribed a 40 Hours week for children and adolescents. Under the employment of Children Act as amended in 1951, no person between the ages of 15 and 17 can be employed unless he is allowed a rest interval of at least 12 consecutive hours in a day. At least 7 of these hours should be between 10 P. M. and 7 A. M.

The main provisions of the various State Acts, regulating the employment of children and young persons are found in the following statement¹:—

PROVISIONS RELATING TO HOURS OF WORK, ETC

States	Minimum age of employment	Employment of young persons Permitted during	Hours of work of young persons	Rest intervals for young persons
1 Assam	12			
2 Bombay	12	6 a. m. to 7 p. m.	6 per day	Half an hour after 3 hours' continuous work.
3 Madhya Pradesh	12	7 a. m. to 9 p. m.	7 per day & 36 per week	One hour after 4 hours' work.
4 Madras	14	6 a. m. to 7 p. m.	7 per day & 42 per week Over time work prohibited	...
5 Punjab	...	8 a. m. to 7 p. m.	7 per day & 42 per week ²	² Half an hour after 3 1/2 hours' continuous work.
6 Uttar Pradesh	14 (except as apprentices)	..	6 per day	...
7 West Bengal	..	...	7 per day & 40 per week ²	One hour after 4 hours' work
8 Hyderabad	12	6 a. m. to 7 p. m.	7 per day & 42 per week	...
9 Madhya Bharat	12	...	6 per day	Half an hour after 3 hours' work
10 Bihar	12	7 a. m. to 7 p. m.	Children 5 per day & 30 per week Young persons ² 7 per day & 42 per week	One hour after 4 hours work.

Some of the smaller establishments, however, even though coming under the Factories Act, particularly bidi workshops, Match

¹ Indian Labour Year Book, 1953-54 (1955), p. 69.

² Persons below the age 14 under the Punjab Act, 17 under the West Bengal Act and between 14 and 18 under the Bihar Act are deemed to be young persons.

Factories in South India and Cashewnut Factories in Travancore-cochin do employ childrens below the prescribed age limit. In many cases such children have been certified as of age for employment. The Asian Regional Conference of the International Labour Organisation (Tokyo 1953) considered the difficulties in the way of assessing the age of children in Asian countries. "National Systems of birth registration which facilitates determination of the age of an applicant for employment have not yet been introduced in all the Asian countries and in many of them the apparant age of a young person can only be determined by medical examination while this method is useful where no other methods of determining age have yet been developed, serious consideration should be given to the possibility of introducing compulsory birth registrations at the earliest practicable opportunity of extending such system in cases where the registration of births is required only in certain parts of the national territory."¹

Child Labour and the International Labour Organisation

The I. L. O. has since its inception in 1919 adopted the following Convention and Recommendations relating to children and young-persons.

Conventions

- (1) Minimum age (Industry) convention, 1919.
- (2) Night work of young persons (Industry) convention, 1919.
- (3) Minimum age (Agriculture) Convention, 1921.
- (4) Minimum age (Trimmers and Stokes) Convention, 1921.
- (5) Medical examination of young persons (Sea) Convention, 1921.
- (6) Minimum age (New Industrial employment) Convention, 1932
- (7) Minimum age (Sea) Convention (revised), 1932.
- (8) Minimum age (Industry) Convention (Revised), 1937.
- (9) Minimum age (Non Industrial) Convention (Revised), 1937.
- (10) Medical examination of young persons (Industry) Convention, 1946.
- (11) Medical examination of young persons (Non Industrial Occupations) Convention, 1946.
- (12) Night work of young persons (Non Industrial occupations) Convention, 1946.

¹ Measures for the Protection of Young Workers in Asian countries, *I. L. O. Asian Regional Conference*, (Tokyo) 1953, *Report*, p. 13.

- (13) Night Work of Young Persons (Industry) Convention (Revised), 1948.

Recommendations

- (1) Night work of Children and Young Persons (Agriculture) Recommendation, 1921.
- (2) Minimum age (Non Industrial employment) Recommendation, 1932.
- (3) Minimum age (Family undertakings) Recommendation, 1937.
- (4) Medical Examination of Young Persons Recommendation, 1946.
- (5) Night Work of Young Persons (Non-Industrial occupation) Recommendation, 1946.

How to avoid the Employment of Child Labour

The solution is very easy as it seems to a casual observer. Some people are of the opinion that if existing Labour legislation is strictly enforced much of the evils will disappear. There are others who think that minimum age for the employment of children in any remunerative occupation outside the house be fixed and apply it simultaneously to all avenues of employment including agriculture, trade and workshops. Again working conditions in all places where children are employed might be brought under control by requiring them to take a licence, and in cases the children are not properly treated those licences may be cancelled.

But we will have to probe deep into the question. The problem of child labour is not a problem in or by itself, but it is a part of the still larger problem of social welfare. Child labour cannot be eliminated in the presence of poverty and starvation in midst. Child labour is due to economic necessity. Remove this and the problem will be solved, "The most effective way," observes Paul Douglas, "In which society protects children is in providing their parents with sufficient income so that they can be brought up properly. It is folly to expect wage earner with unduly low income to feed clothe and rear their children in any adequate fashion. Give a family of average intelligence sufficient money and it will not only be able to take care of its children, but it will gradually learn to do so. The most pressing obligation is for the industry to put its system of wage payment upon an adequate basis and until this is done, social reform will swim against the child."

It is the most cruel form of unconscious hypocrisy for business men to pay insufficient wages to those of their employees who are father of families and then by contributing to child welfare agencies

to feel that they have done their duty. The child earning agencies for all their efforts cannot remove more than a small fraction of injury which children suffer from poverty in their home.

As the I. L. O. Report on the Protection of Children and Young Workers has so rightly emphasised, "the problem of prohibition of child labour is inextricably mixed up with the problem of the maintenance of the child and the provision of a living wage for all employed persons adequate to maintain the family at an adequate standard." The fixation of a minimum and fair wage and a scheme of social insurance for industrial workers can solve the problem to a very great extent. The society must take the responsibility of maintaining and educating the children in order to secure to all children the fullest possible opportunity for the development of their intellectual, moral and spiritual facilities so that when grown up, they may become efficient workers, intelligent citizens, and responsible men and women, for their own greater good as well as that of Society.

CHAPTER VI

EMPLOYMENT AND WORKING CONDITIONS

An industrial worker has the right to know the terms and conditions under which he is employed and the rules of discipline which he is required to follow. Broadly speaking in Indian industry the rules of service are not definitely set out and where they exist they have been very elastic to suit the convenience of the employers.

The standing orders refer to rules and regulations governing the condition of employment of workers. The first legislative enactment in India which incidently sought to regulate the making of standing orders was the Bombay Industrial District Act 1932, which provided that, "Every employer in respect of any industry or occupation to which this section has been applicable shall within 2 months from the date of such application sue to the Commissioner of Labour, for approval in such labour as may be prescribed, standing orders regulating the relations between him and his employees with regard to industrial matters mentioned in Schedule I."

"The matters mentioned in the schedule are as follows : —

- (i) Classification of employees, permanent, temporary of apprentices, probationers, badlis, etc ,
- (ii) Manner of notification to employees of periods and hours of work ; holidays, pay days and wage rates ;
- (iii) Shift working ;
- (iv) attendance and late coming ;
- (v) leave and holidays and conditions, procedure and authority to grant these ;
- (vi) liability to search and entry into premises by certain gates ;
- (vii) temporary stoppages of work and rights and liabilities of employers and employees arising therefrom ;
- (viii) termination of employment and notice to be given by employer and employee ;
- (ix) suspension or dismissal for misconduct and acts or omissions which constitute misconduct ,

- (x) means of redress for employees against unfair treatment or wrong exaction on the part of the employer or his agent or servant."¹

The textile mills of Bombay follow the standing orders as finally settled by the Industrial Court. Till 1946, no such legislation existed in any other state, yet several mills in important centres made their own standing orders. The standing orders drawn up by the Employers' Association of Northern India were followed by textile mills in Kanpur. Similarly, the standing orders drawn up by the South India Millowners' Association were followed by some mills there. The Jute Mills Association also drafted rules regarding the conditions of service for workers in the jute mills. These rules provided for the maintenance of service cards, classification of employees, manner of notification of periods, hours of work, holidays, pay days and wage rates, attendance and late coming, safety regulations, prevention of pilferage, stoppage of work, termination of employment, punishment for misconduct and housing accommodation.² Several individual mills had also their own standing orders. The TISCO, Jamshedpur, have service rules to regulate the conditions of employment. The Delhi Cotton Mills, the Bangalore Cotton, Woollen and Silk Mills, some engineering concerns of Bombay and Calcutta and ordnance factories have their own service rules. In seasonal factories, and unregulated factories and mines and plantations, there are no standing orders and the decisions of the management is final. Such is also the condition in rice mills, cigarette factories, mica mines and paper mills.

Industrial Employment (Standing Orders) Act, 1946

The Government of India passed the Industrial Employment (Standing Orders) Act in 1946, with a view to regulating the conditions of employment all over the country. This Act is applicable to every industrial establishment wherein 100 or more workmen are employed. Under this Act every establishment is required to draft and submit Standing Orders for approval to the Labour Commissioners of the respective areas. A copy of this draft is then forwarded to the trade union of the workmen (if any) or to the workmen, asking them to submit their objections, if any, within 15 days from the receipt of the draft. When necessary modifications or additions have been made by the parties and the Commissioner, he will send a copy of the certified standing orders to the employer. Any party aggrieved by the Order of the Commissioner can make appeal to the Appellate Authority, within 21 days from the receipt of the order from the certifying officer. The order of the appellate authority shall be final. The standing orders will come in force on the expiry of 30 days from the date in which the copies were

¹ *Labour Investigation Committee's Main Report*, p. 110.

² K. N. Srivastava, *Industrial Peace and Labour in India*, p. 229.

sent by the Certifying Officer and on the expiry of 7 days from the date on which the copies were sent by the Appellate authority to the employer and trade Union. The standing orders shall be pasted in Hindi and English on special boards near the entrance and in all the departments of the factories.

An employer who fails to submit draft standing orders as required by this Act, shall be punishable with a fine which may extend to Rs. 5,000 and in case of continuing offence with a further fine which may extend to Rs. 300, for every day after the first, during which the default continues.

Promotions

"In all progressive industrial countries it is recognised that one of the effective methods of securing contentment among workers and creating loyalty to the organisation is the existence of a definite and well-planned system of transfers and promotions."¹ Promotion may be defined as a rise in status or wages or both.

Regarding the practice of granting promotion in Indian industries the Rege Committee observes, "In Indian textile industry there are usually no incremental scales for the workers, except for supervisory staff and officers. Graded promotions are sometimes given to others as well but workers have justifiably complained that more often than not such promotions depend upon favouritism and bribery than on considerations of merit or seniority of service."² In engineering industry, both incremental and graded promotions are more common especially for skilled workers and artisans. Incremental scales of this type are also prevalent in other industries, such as chemicals, potteries, cigarette factories, dockyards, etc. In seasonal and unregulated factories and in mines and plantations, barring a few places, there is generally neither graded nor incremental promotions."³

Thus no regular system exists in Indian industries for granting promotion and even where they are given, they are very small and secondly they are generally based on favouritism and bribery, rather than on the consideration of merits. It was stated before the Bihar and Bombay Labour Enquiry Committees by labour witnesses that the plea that promotions are given solely on merit is a convenient cloak behind which corruption and favouritism are rife.⁴

Therefore, if a system of promotion is to be scientific and conducive to efficient management of labour, it is necessary that it should be as impartial as possible and that both merit of a worker

¹ *The Bombay Textile Labour Enquiry Committee Report*, p. 359.

² The same are the views of *B. T. L. Enquiry Committee*, *vide*, p. 359.

³ *Labour Investigation Committee, Main Report*, p. 114.

⁴ Quoted by *The Labour Investigation Committee Report*, p. 115.

and the length of his service should be taken into consideration. It must be seen that the worker is entitled to get incremental promotions automatically by diet of seniority, while graded promotions should be decided by reference to merit.

Holidays and Leave

The value of holidays in maintaining and increasing industrial efficiency as well as in improving the relations between the workers and the employers cannot be over-emphasised. The Bihar Labour Enquiry Committee so aptly remarks, "Tropical climate, poor diet and physique of the workers, the insanitary and unattractive conditions in which they live, combine to make holidays with pay even more necessary in India than in the west. As the vast majority of the workers are drawn from the villages with which they maintain the closest connection and would, therefore, probably spend the holidays there, there will not only be benefit to their health but also a feeling of happiness from an annual sojourn, however brief".¹

The Labour Commission considered that the employers should recognise the need and value of holidays and should actually encourage workers to apply for definite periods of leave, with a promise that on return they would be able to resume their old work, and that even leave without pay or allowance might be a great advance on the present system.² The Bombay and Kanpur Labour Enquiry Committees also recommended for the provision of leave with pay.

The Labour Investigation Committee observed this regarding the leave and holidays in Indian industries³ :—

"It may be convenient here to give a broad picture of the extent to which holidays with pay and leave are granted in different industries. It may be stated that this differs from industry to industry and makes any generalisations difficult. In the cotton textile industry, apart from Sunday, which is a holiday, with pay for permanent and without pay for daily-rated workers, and a few festival holidays at different times of the year, varying from 3 to 7 in number, which are granted everywhere, a few concerns grant casual or privilege leave to the workers. In this respect, however, it appears that the mills in South India are somewhat more liberal and allow leave with pay for a period varying between 10 and 15 days, whereas those in older centres like Bombay and Ahmedabad have less satisfactory provision for granting such leave. In Nagpur the Empress Mills workers who have put in 20 years' service are entitled to 12 days' leave with pay in a year. In the jute industry

¹ *Bihar Labour Enquiry Committee Report*, p. 26

² *Report of the Royal Commission on Labour*, 1931, pp 26-27.

³ *Labour Investigation Committee Report*, pp. 117-118.

since 1943, 7 holidays with pay are granted to all workers in a year. Workers are also allowed sick leave without pay and at the management's discretion, on the production of a medical certificate. In the woollen and silken textiles, generally no leave with pay is granted. In the engineering industry, holidays are permitted for festivals, etc. the number varying in different concerns from 2 to 18 days. Usually, however, these holidays are without pay for daily-rated and temporary workers and with pay for others. Permanent workers are eligible to privilege leave of two weeks and casual leave of one week, while sick leave without pay is granted at the discretion of the management. In other perennial factories, such as cement, matches, paper, glass, etc., festival holidays up to five days are generally given to all workers, and these are generally without pay for the daily-rated, piece-rated or temporary workers. Most of the concerns in the chemical industry in Bengal allow 11 to 24 holidays besides Sundays, with pay in most cases to all workers except those in the "continuous processes" who get one day off after 14 days' work. In the cement industry, where Sundays are not holidays as such for continuous-process workers, shift workers get one day off in every 12 days in Bihar, and 32 hours' rest after 21 days' work in the Punjab. In seasonal factories, such as sugar, rice, cotton ginning and pressing factories, etc., apart from Sundays, holidays are generally given on bazar days in a few cases while very few festival holidays are allowed. Holidays are without pay for temporary workers and with pay to the monthly paid permanent staff. In unregulated factories, such as mica, shellac, bidi-making, tanneries, carpet weaving and coir matting, a weekly holiday is observed, though not always strictly. Most of the workers being piece-rated do not get any holidays with pay. In certain concerns only time-rated workers are allowed leave with pay, not as matter of right, but, as one of favour.

In the mining industry, workers get a weekly holiday and a few festival holidays which are without pay for the daily-rated and piece-rated workers and with pay for others. In gold mines, underground workers get 21 days' privilege leave while surface workers get 14 days', in both cases with pay. In the mineral Oil Industry, daily-rated workers are entitled to 14 days' leave with pay and 28 days' without pay, in addition to three religious holidays with pay in Assam, while in the Punjab 15 days' leave with pay is granted to monthly-rated workers only and 6 religious holidays with pay to all. In the plantations, Sunday is a holiday (except generally in the flush season) and it is with pay only in the case of time-rated staff. Only in Assam, some gardens give two or three paid holidays in a year to all workers on festival occasions, while in Bengal such holidays are unpaid. In South India, there are no paid holidays, as a rule, though a few estates give one paid holiday at Christmas. Tappers in rubber estates have no weekly holiday."

On the State Railways, inferior staff with three years or more of service are entitled to privilege leave of between 10 and 20 days, graduated according to length of service and the workers' category. Casual leave is not given to employees with less than six months' service. For those with more than ten years' service, medical leave on half average pay is allowed up to 15 or 30 days. In deserving cases, disability leave on half pay, hospital leave on average or half-average pay and extraordinary leave without pay are also granted. Daily-rated and temporary staff are given ten days' leave with pay on completing three years' service and extraordinary leave without pay for a period not exceeding three months at a time. On some of the Railways, the menial staff are not allowed any leave as a matter of right, though there are leave for superior staff."

HOURS OF WORK

Importance of Regulating Hours of Work

The health and efficiency of the workers depend mostly on the number of hours they have to work. If the hours of work are long, the worker is bound to be tired and slack in his duties. This tiredness is the sole cause of his shattered health, which ultimately tells upon his efficiency. One of the worst features of the factory work in every country has been the long hours of work. India has been no exception to it. In the cotton and gin presses, even as late as 1908, a Factory Inspector observed that the usual day in gins was 14 to 15 and sometimes 18 hours. Mr. R. F. Wadia, a manager of gin press in the course of his evidence before the Bombay Factory Labour Commission of 1885 states, "In ordinary season, that is, when work is not very pressing, the engine starts between 4 and 5 a.m. and stops at 7, 8 or 9 p.m. The hands work continuously all these hours and are relieved by one another for meals. In busy season the gins and presses sometimes work both night and day with half an hour's rest in the evening. The same set continues working day and night, for about 8 days, and when it is impossible to go on longer, other sets of hands are procured for Bombay . . . Both men and women come to the factories at 3 a.m. as they have no idea of the time . . ." So also another witness Mr. Drewett :

"The ginning season lasts about 8 months, about 5 of which the hands work 5 a.m. to 10 p.m. and the remaining 3 months they work day and night. The hands are mostly women. The gins and presses never stop for meals: as a rule the hands take their meals at the gins at the same time. He has often seen them supplying the gins thus mechanically three parts asleep, and a child at the breast sucking one minute and throwing cotton in the machine the next. They go on working day and night until they are completely worked out."¹

¹ Quoted by Buchanan, *Op. cit.*, pp. 304, 305.

The Indian employees often complain that the Indian worker is incapable of steady and continuous work. They are often found missing from their machines. This habit of the worker, if we probe deep into the question, is chiefly due to the long hours of work. Long hours of work not only cause physical exertion but also keep a worker away from home for a long time, and he cannot reasonably look after his household affairs and his family members. A normal period of working hours, with rest interval, would enable the workers to perform their duties efficiently. Hence, the question of reduction in the hours of work has always been an important question for industrial workers in India—but it was not till 1948 that the 48 hours' week was introduced in India.

Hours of Works and Factories

Long hours were common in the cotton and jute factories. With the introduction of electric lighting winter hours were lengthened, a fifteen-hour-day was the usual practice. The first Factories Act of 1881, only fixed the hours of work for children between 7 and 12 years, at 9 per day, with one hour daily rest and four holidays in a month. The Factories Act of 1911 for the first time limited the working hours of men to 12 a day. The Act of 1922 further limited the hours to 60 a week and 11 a day in all factories. The Act of 1934 reduced the hours to 54 a week and 10 a day in perennial factories. After the passing of the Act of 1934 the number of hours in cotton mills in Bombay and other centres were reduced to 9 a day and the mills generally worked for 6 days in a week. The Act of 1934 was amended several times and was finally replaced by a new Act in 1948. The Act 1948 reduced the hours to 48 a week in all the factories with a spread-over of $10\frac{1}{2}$ hours in a day. The hours of children and adolescents have been reduced for 5 to $4\frac{1}{2}$ hours.

The table on next page shows the hours of work, etc.; in factory industries.¹

Hours of Work in Mines

There was no restriction on hours of labour in mines by legislation till 1923. In that year a new Mines Act was passed limiting the weekly hours to 60 above ground and 54 underground. There was no limitation of daily hours of work and workers often remained underground for 16 and 17 hours at a stretch. Underground work for women was prohibited in certain mines only after 1929 and by the amendment Act of 1935, no woman was allowed to work below the ground. The restriction was withdrawn during the war on account of scarcity of labour but the ban was re-imposed in 1946. The Indian Mines Act was amended in 1935, under which the hours of work were fixed at 54 per week and

¹ *Labour Investigation Committee Report*, pp. 127-131. (Abridged from Table 44)

HOURS OF WORK, SPREADOVER, SHIFT AND REST DAYS IN FACTORY INDUSTRIES

Sl. No.	Name of industry	Hours of work per day	Hours of work per week	Spreadover	Is there a weekly or a fortnightly holiday.	Remarks
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1	Cotton	7½-10	45-62	8-13	Weekly	Overlapping shifts worked in some units in Kanpore, Madua, Combatore and Cochin. Exemptions in respect of hours have been granted in many provinces.
2	Jute	9-12	60-72	13-14	Weekly	During war time, Bengal mills with more than 220 looms were permitted to work 66 hours a week; and those with less than 220 looms were permitted to work 72 hours a week. Many of the mills, however, work for 60 hours in some departments and 66 in others.

3 Silk	7½-2	54 or less	8½-10	Weekly	In many cases the hours were less than the statutory limit of 54.
4 Woollen	9-10 (In one unit in Bangalore, 3 shifts of 8 hours each are worked in the continuous process departments).	54	10-11	Weekly	
5 Engineering (including railway work-shops)	7½ to 12 hours for shifts workers (in some cases night shift workers work for 7 hours.)	42 to 72	8-12	Some workers get an off-day after 14 days' work. No separate holidays are given to workmen detained for urgent work on Sundays.	Special exemptions were granted during war time to factories engaged on war work for exceeding the factory hours laid down, subject to a maximum of 12 hours a day and 72 hours a week. Overlapping shifts worked in some units
6 Matches	8½-10	54-60	9-11	Weekly	Some of the factories work 60 hours a week having obtained special exemptions from the provisions of the Factory Act. Overlapping shifts worked in some units.

Sl. No.	Name of industry	Hours of work per day	Hours of work per week	Spreadover	Is there a weekly or a fortnightly holiday?	Remarks
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
7	Potteries	8 for shifts workers; 9 for general workers.	54	Never exceeds 10 hours.	Fortnightly holiday for shift workers and weekly holiday for general shift workers.	
8	Printing Presses	7½-8½	45-52	Maximum 12 hours.	Weekly	Overlapping shifts worked in some presses.
9	Glass	7½-9 hours for shift workers; 10 for general workers.	60	8-10½ hours for shift workers 11 hours for general workers.	A holiday usually after 14 days' work.	In cottage shops at Firozabad, workers work on an average for 10-11 hours a day. Section 35 of Factories Act in regard to weekly holidays in glass factory has been made inoperative in some provinces.

10	Chemicals Pharmaceutical works	7-10	49-56 for continuous shifts workers, 54 for others.	8 for continuous process workers and 10-12 for general shift workers.	Continuous process workers get one day off after every 10-14 days. Weekly holidays for others.	Exemptions from some of the provisions of the Factories Act given to several factories as a war time measure. Overlapping shifts worked by one unit only.
11	Sugar	8 for manufacturing section.	..	8 hours	Engineering Section get a weekly day of rest.	
		8-9 for Engineering section.	..	9-10 hours	The shifts are so arranged that each worker gets continuous rest for 32 hours after every 12th or 13th day in manufacturing section.	
12	Cotton Ginning and Baling.	9-10	54-60	10-13 hours	Weekly	In C. P. and Behar and Khandesh factories' workers, work for 9 hours with an hour's recess.

Sl. No.	Name of industry	Hours of work per day	Hours of work per week	Spreadover	Is there a weekly or a fortnightly holiday?	Remarks
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
13	Rice Mills	7-10	42-60. The Act is not observed in the night shift by several employers.	1-12	Weekly	Overlapping shifts worked in some mills in Madras and C.P. and employment of women is not uncommon in Bengal, C. P., Bombay in night shifts.
14	Cement	7½-8 for shift workers.	48-54	8	One day in the week as a closed day for general shift workers.	
		8-9 for general workers.	...	10½	Continuous process workers get a spell of rest for 32 hours after 10-14 days' work in the case of some and after 3 weeks in the case of others.	

15	Paper	7 to 8 in continuous process shifts. 9 to 10 general shifts.	...	3	General shift workers get one day in the week. Continuous shift workers get 32 hours' rest after 8-12 days' work. Weekly
16	Mica factories,	9	54	10	Regulated Factories one day in a week. Unregulated concerns work all the days in the week.
17	Shellac manufacture	8-10	48-54 regulated factories and 70 hours in unregulated factories.	8-12 hours Morning till evening	
18	Bidi, cigar and cigarettes	11 to 12 for Bidi and cigar. 8-9 for cigarette	... ... ...	... 13	There are no fixed hours of work in Bidi and cigar industries. Payment being on piece rates, the workers come and go as they please. In Spencer's cigar factory at Sindigul hours are limited to 9 for adults and 5 for children. Overlapping shifts prevail in cigarette factories in Bengal.

Sl. No.	Name of industry	Hours of work per day	Hours of work per week	Spreadover	Is there a weekly or a fortnightly holiday?	Remarks
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
19	Carpet Weaving	9-10	...	Morning till evening.	Weekly	The hours are not regulated and usually work is carried on from sunrise to sunset. Overlapping shifts worked in one unit in Calcutta.
20	Tanneries and leather goods manufacture	U. P. 9 days' shift. 8-9 night shift Madras.	54 48-54	10 days' shift 8½-10 night shift.	Weekly (in larger units, smaller units evade the provisions of the Factory Act in this respect.)	There is no regulation of hours except in two units in Madras.
21	Coir matting	9 for men 8 for women 5 for children	54 for men 48 for women 30 for children	10-10½ 9-10 6½-7	Weekly	Children were often found working beyond the scheduled hours.

52
Below 54
Note—These weekly limits are observed in large units only.

10 per day, for workers above ground and 9 hours per day for those underground. The Indian Mines Act, passed in 1952, consolidates the existing law relating to employment and conditions of work in the mining industry and brings it in line with the provisions of the Factories Act of 1948. Under the Act of 1952 the hours of work are 48 per week, 9 per day for workers above ground and 8 hours per day for those underground. The maximum spread-over has been fixed at 12 hours for surface workers and 8 hours for underground workers. For certain categories of underground workers, a 54 hour-week has been prescribed with 9 hours' daily work. The Act raises the age limit of persons employed underground from 17 to 18 and limits the hours of work of adolescents to $4\frac{1}{2}$ per day. Ban on the employment of women underground and night continues. The table on next page shows the hours of work in mines.¹

Hours of Work in Railways

The railway workers fall into two groups: (a) Those employed in workshops who are covered by the Factories Act and (b) those who are employed under the Railways Act. The normal hours of work were 48 in a week of $5\frac{1}{2}$ days in 1930. In the larger locomotive sheds a three-shift system of 8 hours each was worked. Mechanical staff worked 8 hours a day. In the Engineering Department, the hours were 8 to 9 a day and from 48 to 58 a week with regard to running staff a large number worked within the 60-hour limit but in some cases Drivers, Firmen and Guards worked up to 80 hours a week or longer.¹

The Railways Amendment Act of 1930 provided that the railway servants might not be employed for more than 60 hours a week on an average in any month. The hours of work are now fixed in accordance with the award of the Adjudicator, Justice G. S. Rajadhyaksha, according to the category of workers.

(1) Intensive involving continuous concentration or hand labour.

(2) continuous

(3) essentially intermittent, those whose daily duty hours include periods of inaction.

(4) excluded those whose employment is of a light character, e. g. saloon attendants, etc.

For category (1) hours of work were fixed as 45 per week for (2) 54 hours, for (3) 75 hours. For (4) no limit was prescribed but no unreasonable conditions were to be imposed.

¹ *Report of the Royal Commission on Labour*, pp. 156-57.

HOURS OF WORK, SPREADOVER AND WEEKLY HOLIDAY IN MINES

Sl. No.	Name of the Mineral	Hours of the work per day	Hours of the work per week	Spreadover	Is there is a weekly or a fortnightly holiday	Remarks
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1	Manganese	8-9 for surface workers 8 for underground workers except in one mine (where they are 9)	48-54 in M. P. 48 in Bom-bay 63 in Sandur	8-12 8	Weekly	In Sandur there is no regulation of work for contract labour which works for 12 or more hours. There is also no weekly holiday for any worker in Sandur.
2	Salt	9 for underground, workers and surface workers.	54	9-10½	Weekly	
3	Mica	8 per day for underground workers and 9-10 for surface workers.	48 54-60	8 hours for underground workers 10-11 for surface workers	Weekly	
4	Gold	8 for surface as well as underground workers			Weekly for all workers except	

	9 for work-shops, Building and Sanitary Departments.	8 on week day in Assam.	45½ in Assam.	92-10	those on essential services and work-shops.
5 Mineral oil general workers.					Weekly
Shift workers in Refinery.	8	48	8		Weekly except in continuous processes. In such process after every 14 days of work in Assam, but not in Punjab.
Shift workers in oil fields.	8	56	8		No regular rest-day but today leave allowed in Assam but not in Punjab.
6 Iron Ore	8 for Shift workers.	48	9		Weekly
	8 for general workers.	48	9½		Weekly

The working hours for contract labour may be as high as 12 per day in Bihar.

THE FOLLOWING HOURS OF WORK AND PERIODS OF REST HAVE BEEN
PRESCRIBED FOR DIFFERENT CATEGORIES OF RAILWAY WORKERS

Category of Railway Servants	Hours of Work	Periodic Rest
(i) Intensive ...	Maximum of 45 hrs. a week on the average in any month.	A minimum of 30 consecutive hours in a week.
(ii) Continuous ..	Maximum of 54 hrs. a week on the average in any month.	Do.
(iii) Essentially Intermittent.	Maximum 75 hrs. a week.	A minimum of 24 consecutive hrs. including a full night in a week.
(iv) Excluded Staff in Class IV Service.	Do.	At least one period of rest of 48 consecutive hrs. in a month or one period of 24 consecutive hrs. in each fortnight.

Hours of Working in Plantations

Hours of work in plantations, till recently, were not regulated by Law. In plantations of North India, labourers usually work from 8 A. M. to 2 or 3 P. M. In South India tea and coffee estates, the hours are usually longer from 8 A. M. to 5 or 6 P. M. with a rest-interval of one hour, which is often encroached upon. Sunday is usually a holiday in tea and coffee estates, except in busy season.

In October 1951 the Government enacted a Plantation Labour Act which provides for the statutory regulation of working conditions of labour employed in the tea, coffee, rubber and cinchona plantations. The Act fixes the hours of work for adult workers at 54 per week and for adolescents and children at 40 per week. A weekly holiday has been provided if the total period of employment in any week is not less than 6 days. No worker is to work for more than 5 hours without a rest-interval of half an hour. The spread-over has been fixed at 12 hours a day though daily hours of work have not been fixed. The State Government can frame rules to provide for a weekly holiday for workers and for payment of work done on the weekly day of rest.

Conclusion

For creating a permanent working class and to improve the character and efficiency of the Indian worker, State control is necessary. Says Prof Ward, "The resources of our society may be enormously increased by abolishing poverty by reducing the hours of work and by making all its members comfortable and secure in their economic relations. Any sacrifice that society might make

in securing these ends would be many times repaid by actual contributions that the few really talented among the hundreds thus benefited would make to social welfare, for talent is distributed all through the great mass in the same proportions as it exists in the much smaller well-to-do or wealthy class and the main reason why the latter contributes more is because their economic condition affords them opportunity."

The effects of long working hours on workers must be viewed over a number of years. A man may work for a time on a strenuous task for a dozen hours or more per day, but his physique is liable to be so impaired that the length of his working life is less than that of a man whose hours are more reasonable. The long working day multiplied by a short working life are less productive in the aggregate than shorter working days multiplied by longer working life. The prevention of undue fatigue always increases the efficiency of the operatives, and the liability to accidents and diseases is diminished. Hence, from the purely economic as well as from the social stand-point excessive hours of work are to be deprecated.

General Working Conditions¹

As regards the conditions of work it may be said that the employers try to meet the minimum requirements as laid down by the law and the cases are not uncommon, where even this much is evaded. The employers do not take up any extra measures to prevent the occurrence of accidents or secure better safety for the worker against dust, heat, etc. Although the conditions under which the workers perform their tasks, have a great bearing on their general health and efficiency, but the tendency of the employers in this respect is somewhat deplorable. We can consider the relationship of efficiency of the workers and the general working conditions under the following three heads : (a) Ventilation, (b) Temperature, Lighting.

(a) *Ventilation.* Proper ventilation is very essential for checking the evil effects on the general health of the workers because of the unhealthy surroundings in the large-scale industries. It is urgently needed in textile industries where the workers have to work in dusty and or moist air. Several industrial processes carried on by the workers are very injurious for their health as they produce large amount of dust for the removal of which if artificial arrangements are not made, they may tell upon the health of the workers resulting in severe deterioration of health. Similarly, an atmosphere kept moist by steam or spray, as in a cotton mill, may have a very bad effect on the health of the workers. There are several other such trades which cause dust or injurious fumes and if measures are not adopted even on the humanitarian grounds, it may cause a national

¹ This section is largely based on *Labour Investigation Committee Report*.

loss by adversely affecting the health of the workers who are the bulwarks in the industrial field. Ventilation may be natural in which case it is effected by windows and ventilators. It may also be artificial either to pump outside the factories the bad air or to propulse air into buildings by mechanical devices. In any way proper arrangements are of utmost importance but unfortunately such arrangements are lacking in various factory industries.

(b) *Temperature.* Reasonable temperature in work-rooms is very essential from the efficiency point of view of the workers but in this respect the arrangements are lacking in general throughout the country. No special attention has been paid to this point. However, in a fair number of cotton mills in Bombay and Ahmedabad air conditioning plants have been installed with the result that even on the hottest day the inside temperature is kept low. Conditions in Ahmedabad in this respect are better in comparison to Bombay. The conditions in other industrial centres are worse. It will be in their own interest if the employers pay special attention to this point which appears as a great bottleneck in the path of efficiency of the workers in summer season. They may either instal air conditioning plants or at least should provide *Khas Tattis* in the summer. Such an expenditure will not go a waste.

(c) *Lighting.* Adequate and suitable lighting in places of work is very essential for the workers. On the one hand it protects the eye-sight of the workers and on the other hand the output is also increased. There may be either natural lighting which may be derived from the roof or from side windows. Artificial lighting may also be had through electricity, kerosene or petromax lamps but the continuous use of artificial lighting is in itself unnatural and strains the eyes. Moreover, if the arrangements of artificial lighting are unsatisfactory, it increases the risk of accidents. The output is also decreased under such circumstances and in the absence of adequate light insanitary conditions in the work-rooms prevail. The factory buildings in our country are old and not well planned. They are also surrounded by other buildings, which act as barriers for the entrance of proper natural light. These drawbacks are very conspicuous in many factories in India. However, as regards the modern bigger units proper attention is paid for the entrance of the natural light in the work-rooms. But such is not the case with smaller and unregulated units especially those housed in old buildings. They present very bad and unsatisfactory conditions as to light, ventilation, etc., and leave much room for substantial improvement.

The employers must see that lighting is not only sufficient but also it does not fall direct on the actual place of work. In many cases light falls directly on the eyes of the workers while at work. This is also much injurious.

Statutory provisions for the installation of adequate and suitable lighting in every part of a factory and their implementation are of utmost significance to improve things.

To conclude, therefore, it may be laid down that working conditions in bigger units are somewhat satisfactory, though much scope remains for their improvement. But most of the employers are indifferent towards improving things. They are merely satisfied to meet the requirements of the law in this and not unoften even they are also evaded. The actual provisions made in regard to protection of machinery, etc., are in several cases disregarded. Thus they lack the proper spirit to carry out such improvements. But there are also certain enlightened employers who have made special efforts to improve the working conditions. They have not only provided guards for the exposed moving parts of machinery, but have gone further and organised safety-first committees with a view to educate them in the risks of accidents.

It can be laid down with due emphasis that "a general strengthening of the machinery of inspection, more frequent inspections and more stringent enforcement of the existing provision and their application to unregulated concerns should go a long way in bettering the conditions, reducing the number of accidents and maintaining the efficiency of workers."

Working Conditions in Textile Mills

On the whole particularly in newer units, the factory buildings are well lighted and ventilated. The general lay-out of the machinery is also satisfactory in these newly built factory buildings. Workers can move about freely as there is sufficient space. But in the older cotton and jute mills such is not the case. Arrangements for lighting and ventilation are far from satisfactory and there is a considerable congestion in several cases. Machinery is also not properly laid down with the result that the workers have no adequate moving space. A fair number of cotton mills in Bombay and Ahmedabad and a few in other parts of the country have provided air-conditioning in these departments. Some mills in Bombay and Ahmedabad have also installed vacuum stripping plants for removing cotton dust. Where this is not done the conditions are horrible. The weaving sheds are humidified in some places, but then the arrangements in this respect are not satisfactory everywhere. The use of electric fans is also done in several department of mills in Bombay and Madras.

As regards the conditions in Jute Mills there is no provision of exhaust fans and dust extractors or even cooling plants have not been installed in most of them. In old-established industries like cotton and jute, much improvements are required than the minimum requirements laid down by law

in respect of health and comfort. On the other hand, it is unusual for factory managements to provide even seating arrangements to the operatives during working hours. If high stools are provided to the workers, it would cause much less fatigue and thus the efficiency of the workers is bound to go up. Working conditions inside most of the silk and woollen mills are generally satisfactory.

Engineering

Ventilation and lighting in engineering industries are in most cases adequate and satisfactory but sudden development because of the increased demand on account of war-time requirements did not lead to increase in their size with the result that although employment of labour increased to keep pace with the required increased production, necessary improvements in the working conditions could not be brought in several general engineering work-shops and so the conditions could not remain as satisfactory as they were before the war. Moreover, certain sections such as foundry, carpenters, work-shop smithy and shot-mill are very dark and congested in several cases. A great deal of work on wood and metal is done in the open in many concerns which is very undesirable, as this exposes the workers to sun's rays throughout their work.

Working Conditions in Printing Presses

With the exception of some large presses, most of the regulated and unregulated presses especially the latter, are located in premises unsuited for press work. They are designed for purposes other than those of housing of a factory. The workers have to work in dark and ill-ventilated rooms. In many presses, walls and ceilings seldom white-washed or painted, had accumulated a wealth of dirt and cobwebs. In such presses, serious overcrowding and congestion are inevitable. The large presses, too appear to have suffered from a tendency towards congestion in the war time due to pressure of work. In most cases, flooring even when cemented and brick-laid is dirty, uneven and unclean. Added to congestion is the acute discomfort caused by high temperature in summer, cold in winter and leaky roofs in the rainy season. Paucity of fans in most of these presses adds to the discomfort of workers. One of the recognised occupational diseases in this industry amongst the workers is caused due to lead poisoning. Lead is an insidious industrial poison which enters into the system of the workers in several ways. Workers in printing presses who constantly handle lead are prone to the slow absorption of the minute particles of the metal through taking their meals with unwashed or not properly washed hands. It is significant that in many cases, both employers and employees had not even heard of lead poisoning. In view of this it is not surprising that there is hardly any consciousness of the necessity of mitigating the incidence of this menace. In

some presses, soap, occasionally of antiseptic quality, is being provided by employers. But it is doubtful whether in most cases this is being done as a safeguard against lead poisoning. Nail-brushes are in use in not more than 3 or 4 printing presses. There is no arrangement for letting out lead-fumes generally and the knowledge is lacking in this respect. Even in presses which have arrangements for letting out lead-fumes the position is not satisfactory. The significance of these details lies in a the general ignorance of the nature and possibility of lead poisoning in this industry on the part both of employers and employees and secondly lack of adequate safeguard against this occupational disease. The incidence of the disease may not always be fully detected. It is necessary, therefore, that each press should display notices in conspicuous places giving the causes of lead poisoning and how best to remove them. The employees should also take steps to bring home to the workers the necessity of cleaning hands and finger-nails, thorough rinsing of the mouth before eating, regular daily baths after work and avoidance of food and drink in work-rooms. They should also instal suitable exhaust arrangements, bath-rooms and wash-basins fitted with nail-brushes. Inspectors of Factories should insist on them and also see that arrangements are in force for proper ventilation and wet cleansing of floor which should invariably be cemented. A gradual deterioration of eye-sight is another occupational disease in the printing industry. Inadequate and unsatisfactory lighting arrangements inevitably put a heavy strain on the eyes of compositors and spoil their vision. Steps should be taken to remove these defects also.

Working Conditions in Glass Industry

The frequency of minor accidents like burns and cuts are very high in glass factories. In the smaller concerns, most of the floor area is occupied by the furnace around which blowers and helpers blow molten glass and swing the blow pipes. The smallness of the floor is therefore the main cause of cuts and burns in spite of all the care and attention which the workers may take.

Another cause for the frequency of accidents is that most of the workers go about their task bare-footed. Small pieces of glass which may be scattered on the floor pierce the skin.

Again, red-hot electric wires are used to cut the tubings and cases of burns often occur as no gloves are generally given to or worn by the workers who use them. With the exception of a couple of factories no steps are taken by employers to protect the workers against the cuts. A number of diseases from which glass workers suffer are occupational in character, although they do not come under the Workmen's Compensation Act. The incidence of asthma and bronchitis is so high among blowers and helpers that they have to stop work in winter. Mouth blowing over-strains the lungs and workers easily catch respiratory diseases. Moreover, the use of

the same blow pipe by several workers spreads the contagion to all. Several workers, particularly the helpers and blowers, are susceptible also to pleurisy and pneumonia. During the rains, they may rush out into the open from the furnace shed and catch chill. As long as there is no arrangement for the workers adjacent to the furnace shed, such cases are bound to occur. Some cases of silicosis are also found among the mixers who work in closed rooms in an atmosphere laden with the dust of silica, lime and other chemicals. Besides injuring the lungs, the dust affects the eyes of the workers. The glare of the furnace fire has also a deleterious effect on eyes. The use of gloves and goggles is provided only in a few factories, and in a number of cases, the factories do not adhere strictly to the scheduled hours of work. The workers have to work for long hours. The workers also do not get any casual leave. Conditions in the cottage shops at Firozabad are deplorable. Most of them are small, one-roomed buildings, the floors of which are almost entirely monopolised by an open furnace containing a number of fire clay pots of various coloured glasses. They do not have chimneys and are always full of smoke. The U. P. Government have made efforts to improve conditions and have at their own expense provided five model-buildings, but these accommodate only an insignificant proportion of the workers. The rest continue to work in the ill-ventilated, one-roomed buildings. This is all the more serious as these cottage shops employ a large number of children. Nor are the conditions of work any better in the smaller bhattas where *shishgars* manufacture bangles with or without the aid of the hired labour. The work here is entirely unregulated and children and adults work continuously for long hours near the open furnace. The Employment of Children's Act is not applicable to these cottage shops and children get emaciated, weak, and rickety and spoil their eye-sight at an early age.

Bidi Factories

Bidi-making goes on in small houses, sheds and verandahs both in towns and villages, majority of output being manufactured in villages. Though the bidi factories in Madhya Pradesh come under the local unregulated Factories Act, their conditions are very bad especially in rural areas where workers sit in kutchcha houses with mud flooring and without any arrangements for urinals and latrines. The bidi workshops in Bombay proper are much worse. These are usually situated either in or behind pan shops. Their condition so far as light, ventilation and sanitation are concerned are very deplorable. They are dark, dingy places with very few, if any, windows and approaches that are dingy and insanitary. Men, women, and children are huddled together and there is hardly any space for any worker to move about. Most of them have no lavatories. Where these exist their sanitary condition is miserable. Bidi factories employing 20 or more persons in the Bombay Province come under section 5 (1) of the Factories Act and are

subject to periodic inspections by the Factory Inspector. But in order to avoid inspections they employ less than 20 persons and do not strictly observe even the conditions about sanitation, ventilation, lighting, etc. The conditions in Bengal are no better in respect of ventilation, sanitation and ordinary amenities of life. Latrines are conspicuous by their absence in several places. In every pan-bidi shop in Calcutta there is a section for bidi-making and workers have to enter this section by crawling. The workshops in South India are generally low-roofed, dark and ill-ventilated with uneven mud floors. The places are seldom cleaned and are littered with the refuse of the leaves. There are no windows and the only entrance is often a narrow door so that light and fresh air are totally inadequate in the work-places. The workshops themselves are situated in dirty streets and lanes. There is great over-crowding and there is no arrangement for the supply of drinking water. Although women are employed in these workshops but there are no creches. Giving opiums to their infants by the women so that they may not disturb them at work is very common.

Plantations

Many of the tea gardens are situated in highly malarial regions and this has a blighting influence on the health of the workers; who are mostly recruited from distant places and are not accustomed to such type of climatic conditions. It is but natural that the changes of environment have a depressing upon the health of the workers. Many of them grow anaemic and fall easy victims to disease. To make matter worse, it often happens that food ration in tea gardens is not sufficient and most of the workers suffer from malnutrition. In the Kangra valley nearly 90 per cent of tea garden labour live in adjacent villages and come to work in the gardens every morning. In Dehra Dun about 43 per cent thus come from the villages and in Almora about 10 per cent. Nearly all the workers in South Indian gardens are recruited from the plains with the result that the workers have to face entirely changed climatic conditions and environments. Such a change proves very injurious for their health and lowers their resistance to disease. There is also a change in their diet. Work is also allotted to a maistry on a contract basis who employs women and children and these have to work unduly long hours. Instances are not unknown where the maistry gives corporal punishment to the children to exact more work from them. On many tea estates creches of a crude type are provided where small children of working mothers are cared for and fed. No creches are found in coffee estates. No arrangements are made for supplying drinking water to the workers in the field. The rubber estates are mainly in the plains and conditions of work are not so bad.

Latrines and urinals Most of the factories provide seats for latrines and urinals in proportion to the number of workers as required by the law. But the fact is that the adequacy or otherwise

depends on the type of latrines and the system of cleansing provided. Flush-out latrines are certainly much more serviceable than an equal number of kutchcha or non-septic ones. Even apart from it the general structure, location, upkeep and cleansing service are very unsatisfactory in a large majority of factories. In several cases, workers have to wade through cess-pools to enter the latrines in the rainy season. Some latrines and urinals have no roofs; where corrugated iron sheets are used for roofs they are generally leaky. In some of the latrines there is no privacy and employers feel that there is no need for it. The use of disinfectant is rare and the accommodation becomes inadequate as night soil is not removed regularly at short intervals due to inadequate number of scavengers employed and lack of supervision. This sorry state of affairs is responsible for the general habit of the workers in preferring open fields to latrines. Only rarely are latrines and urinals provided separately. In several cases latrines are not provided separately for males and females. The condition in unregulated factories is still more deplorable in this respect inasmuch as the employers rarely consider the provision of an adequate number of latrines a necessity. In fact, in many unregulated factories latrines and urinals are not provided at all and workers often convert the nearest drain into a lavatory. The ratio of the number of latrines and urinals to the number of workers differs from one regulated unit to another ranging from seat for every 20 workers to seat for every 50 workers. In M. P. no latrines and urinals are generally provided in the camps erected for mining labour. In the Kolar gold field good sanitary arrangements are made both underground and in the miners' colony. In Iron Ore mines latrines are provided only near the offices but nowhere near the mining faces. Latrines are provided on the surface in mica mines but not underground. On plantations also no latrines or urinals are provided in the fields for the use of the workers during working hours. In plantation factories, latrines are provided. The upkeep of latrines is on the whole most unsatisfactory. They are neither white-washed nor tarred in several industrial concerns. Sanitary arrangements must be statutorily improved both by providing a large number of latrines and urinals and by insisting upon their being water-borne or flushed wherever possible, and kept in a sanitary condition.

Drinking Water. The arrangements for the supply of drinking water in factories is very essential but it is very much surprising that no proper arrangements are found in existence for this purpose. They are neither uniform nor always satisfactory. Earthen pots are used for storage of water in some factories but they are not properly cleaned. Water cups, where provided, are not kept clean either. Very often, the employers do not engage workers for serving water at the places of work. In such cases workers sometimes make small contributions to pay the water-man privately engaged by them. Where pipe-water exists, the tap is the only place for drinking water. During summer, no special provisions are made for

keeping the water cool ; only in a few cases iced water is supplied. Conditions in this respect are much worse in the case of small units among the regulated factories and in unregulated establishments. In many cotton ginning factories and bidi workshops, for example, drinking water is not even available. Very often the earthen pots meant to keep water remain empty and dirty. In the rice mills in Behar, although tube-wells are provided, water is available only when engine is working. In South India, the bidi workers go to the nearest street tap to drink water. In the iron ore mines the workers themselves have to carry drinking water with them. No arrangements are generally made for the supply of drinking water in manganese mines. No special arrangements are made for providing drinking water to underground workers in mica mines. So is the case with the plantations where also no arrangements exist for supplying drinking water to the workers in the field. Some tea estates serve hot tea without milk or sugar to the workers at midday.

Thus there is need for much improvement especially in regard to the provision of cool water in summer. Sufficient drinking water is not supplied in unregulated mines, quarries and factories. There is certainly a great necessity for making statutory rules prescribing definite standards regarding structure, storage and cleanliness of the water-room and making the provision of cool water compulsory. The Bombay Textile Labour Inquiry Committee recommended in this connection that the Government of Bombay should modify the Factory Rules in such a way as to make it compulsory for all factories, where more than 100 workers are employed, to arrange for an adequate supply of cool drinking water according to standards to be prescribed by the Chief Inspector of Factories and for the supply of such water in or near all the departments of a factory. This should be throughout the country in all industrial undertakings.

Rest-Shelters

Rest-shelters for taking meals or for use during intervals are provided only by a small number of concerns. Most of the Cotton Mills provide them though they are almost non-existent in Jute Mills in Bengal. The larger units in other industries have set up rest-shelters or dining sheds but they are an exception rather than the rule in smaller units. Unregulated factories make no such provision. Where rest-shelters are provided, their structure usually consists of brick-walls and roofs of corrugated iron sheets. In a number of cases the walls are kutchcha, but in many they are of stone or cement. None of the factories seems to have pre-planned erection of these rest-shelters. They have been constructed at any places convenient to the employers. The sheds are not generally spacious enough to accommodate all or most of the workers. More often than not they are dirty and unclean and the workers prefer the shade of trees to them. Again in most cases, no seating arrangements are made and the workers have to squat on the floor to

take their meals. Under these circumstances if many of the workers do not make use of shelters, as the employers complain, it is not very odd. The reason is obvious for only in very exceptional cases are shelters provided separately for male and female workers.

In mines, generally, no rest-shelters are provided either underground or on the surface. The workers either go to their quarters if they are near or take rest under the shade of trees. In the rainy-season, the trees, however, do not provide shelter. The underground workers take rest either at their places of work or in some hollow space caused by the removal of the ore. The very few shelters provided on the surface are kutchcha and are not adequate in number or equipment. A few sheds seen in some mines are actually meant for blacksmiths who sit there to sharpen the miners' tools. There are no rest-sheds for P. W. D. workers.

It is distressing to see workers under trees or squatting on the ground in dirty premises or seeking dark nooks in their departments to eat their meals. Statutory provisions of rest-shelters (separately for males and females) with adequate seating arrangements can alone help the workers in this matter.

CHAPTER VIII

WAGES AND WAGE TRENDS IN INDIA¹

The earnings of the labourer have the greatest significance for him as they primarily determine the standard of living of himself and the members of his family. This is particularly so in India where indirect benefits by way of Social Services are very limited. Again from the point of view of the employer the wage bill is the most important element in the cost of production in certain industries and unlike other elements it is the one which he can influence most.

The question of wages has recently assumed considerable importance in India, not only as part of the problem of raising the standard of living and the per capita income, but also by itself as a tool to achieve increased production. Wage-earners form an important segment of the Indian population—8·8 million (excluding dependants) employed in industry and small enterprises and 30·4 dependent on agricultural labour—and it is, therefore, no wonder that problems concerning their social and economic development have become topical.

In our country the working class as a whole has been kept deprived of living wage. The earnings of the industrial workers have been far inadequate to enable them to meet even their necessities of life. The whole fabric of industrial machinery is exposed to danger when the mass of the workers is kept at starvation level. To talk of industrial peace is futile, so long as workers are not guaranteed a wage sufficient for their minimum standard of living.²

Before dealing in detail with the wages of the Indian industrial worker it will be useful to recapitulate briefly the current thinking on the problem of wages in general, and its relation to economic development.

Theories of Wages

While it is easy to describe wages as remuneration paid for the service of labour in production, the nature of wages and its determination has been a matter of difference of opinion among economists. Wages are not the same as earnings since a definition of wages would exclude overtime payments, family allowances and unemployed allowances, certain items of costs such as cost of supervisory labour

¹ The matter for this chapter has been freely drawn from I. L. O. s. *Recent Developments in Certain Aspects of Indian Economy III*, 1956, for which we are very thankful to the authorities of the Indian Branch of the I. L. O.

² K. N. Srivastava, *Industrial Peace and Labour in India*, p 71.

are also not generally regarded as wages. Another criterion to determine the nature of wages is the periodicity of payment. If worker is paid by the year, he is considered to be in receipt of a salary, not wages. If he is paid by the hour or day he is stated to be in receipt of wages. If he is paid by the month, he is usually looked upon as being salaried employee rather than a wage-earner. Subject to these limitations wages may be defined as "the remuneration paid by the employer for the services of a worker who is engaged by the hour, days week or fortnight."¹

There are different methods of wage payment prevalent in different industries and in the various countries such as payment by time and payment by results including payment of piece rates.

Wages are fixed mainly through individual bargaining, collective bargaining or by public or state regulation. How wages are determined has been the subject of several theories of wage. The main elements in these theories may be summed up as follows :—

- (i) *Subsistence Theory*. Wages are determined by the cost of providing subsistence for the workers.
- (ii) *Wages Fund Theory*. After rent and raw materials are paid for, a definite amount remains for labour. The total wage fund which is fixed and the number of workers determined the average workers' share in the form of wages.
- (iii) *Residual Claimant Theory*. Wages represent the amount of value created in production that remains after payment has been made to all productive factors other than labour.
- (iv) *Standard of Living Theory*. Wages are determined by the standard of living of the wage-earners.
- (v) *Demand and Supply Theory*. Wages depend upon the demand and supply of labour,
- (vi) *Marginal Productivity Theory*. Wages are determined by the standard of living of the wage-earners
- (vii) *Bargaining Theory*. Wages are determined by the relative bargaining power of workers or trade unions and employers.

The most generally accepted theory regarding the determination of wages in a modern free labour market is combination of the marginal productivity theory and the bargaining theory.

Wages and Economic Development

The importance of wages in economic development arises from fact that wages have two economic functions. As income they

¹ Wage (a) General Report (Report VI-A International Labour Conference, 31st Session San Francisco, 1948), p. 7.

distribute the products of industry among wage-earners who form a substantial section of the community. As cost they influence the proportion in which the resources of the economy are allocated among the different avenues of production. Wages have a role to play in determining price level and employment. It is not possible to delineate with accuracy any forecast of the probable effect of the changes in the wage level on employment or price level. Certain broad conclusions, however, may be drawn. In general any level of wage rates may be compatible with the general objective of full employment without inflation given appropriate fiscal, monetary and price policies and willingness to accept the consequence of those policies.

Wage Trends in India

According to Dr. Radhakamal Mukerjee, "The structure of wages in every industrial country reflects its social and economic development. Nothing shows more vividly India's industrial backwardness and the predominantly agricultural character of the Indian working class than the chaotic and unbalanced character of the Indian wage structure." The Royal Commission on Labour reporting in 1930 comments on the general poverty of the workers.¹ The results of the various family budgets surveys as also the workers low standard of living go to prove this point.

In India, there is still no organisation for the collection of systematic wage data on uniform lines from all States. The only serial wage statistics available are those relating to mining and tea plantation labour furnished respectively in the annual reports of the quinquennial censuses of rural and urban wages conducted in Madras, U. P. and the Punjab and the annual enquiries made in Bombay and C. P. give average figures for skilled and unskilled labourers.

The urgent need for systematic wage data was pointed out by the Royal Commission on Labour in year 1931. But little progress has been made except in the State of Bombay where comprehensive wage census of all perennial and seasonal factories was conducted. Some of the Labour Enquiry Committees appointed by the States to enquire into the conditions of specific industries

¹ *Report of the Royal Commission on Labour*, p 207.

² Important Official Reports are the following :

(i) *General Wage Census*, Bombay 1934

(ii) *The Cantonment Labour Enquiry Committee Report*, 1938.

(iii) *Bihar Labour Enquiry Committee Report*, 1940

(iv) *Report of an Enquiry into Wages and Unemployment in Cotton Textile Industry Bombay*, 1934

(v) *Report of the Bombay Textile Labour Enquiry Committee*, 1938.

have also produced data from time to time.² The Labour Investigation Committee appointed by the Government of India in 1944 also feel the need for systematic and detailed data regarding wages and earnings in the industries selected for ad hoc Surveys.

It was not till 1875 that the first attempt at collecting wage statistics was made by the Government. Between 1873 and 1891, both the agricultural and industrial wages remained fairly steady. The Labour Commission of 1908 observed that the wages of the textile factory workers were considerably higher than those of the same class of workers in other employment. The following table shows the monthly wages in Cotton Textile Mills, at the time of their enquiry³ :—

Workers			Wages		
Half-timers	..	...	Rs. 2½	to	Rs. 4½
Hands (in Cards frame Department)	..	...	7	to	18
Male Piecers	..	...	10	to	16
Women (Reeling and Winding)	..	...	5	to	12
Boys between 14 and 17	...	...	5	to	13
Head male Spinners	..	...	25	to	35
One-loom Weavers	...	...	10	to	15
Two-loom Weavers	...	...	18	to	35

According to Datta's enquiry into Rise of Prices in India, the wage movement in Cotton Industries was like this :—

BASE YEAR 1890-94=100

1890-94	100	1905	121
1895	102	1910	134
1900	112	1912	141

Though the Cotton Mill Wages advanced less rapidly than other wages and prices before 1914, they more than made up the difference during war and post-war years.

The weekly wages in Calcutta Jute Mills between 1896 and 1927 were as follows⁴ :—

AVERAGE WAGES IN JUTE MILL IN BENGAL (IN Rs)

In January	Carders	Rovers	Spinners	Shifters	Winders	Weavers
1896	1.37	2.19	2.50	0.87	2.50	4.75
1900	1.44	2.25	3.00	1.00	3.00	5.25
1908	1.50	2.75	3.50	1.25	3.50	5.50
1916	2.00	3.03	3.50	1.75	3.60	5.65
1920	2.75	5.04	4.33	2.00	5.88	8.75
1927	2.87	4.37	4.50	2.19	5.10	7.50

² Pillai, *Economic Conditions in India*, p. 242.

³ Buchanan, *Development of Capitalistic Enterprise in India*, p. 326.

Mining wages had also been very low in 1891 but the situation, however, improved between 1890 and 1912 as would be clear from the data given below¹:—

INCREASE IN MINING WAGES (INDEX NOS.)

1890-94	...	...	100
1895	..	...	106
1900	...	...	133
1905	...	...	155
1910	...	...	186
1912	...	...	189

After 1916, there was a rise, the average being 12 annas per day in 1921. In Raniganj coalfield, in 1930, men's wages per month varied from Rs. 12 to Rs. 16 and those of women's from Rs. 8 to Rs. 12. The average daily earnings of workers of various categories in different mining industries are given below for 1936²:—

AVERAGE DAILY EARNINGS IN VARIOUS MINES IN INDIA, 1936

Workers	Coal fields (Jharia)			Mica Mines (Bihar)			Iron mines (Bihar)			Manga- nese (M. P.)			
	Rs.	as.	ps.	Rs.	as.	ps.	Rs.	as.	ps.	Rs.	as.	ps.	
Underground:													
Miners	...	0	7	6	0	6	0	...	...	0	6	3
Loaders	...	0	6	3	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Skilled Workers	...	0	9	9	0	6	9	...	...	...	...	...
Unskilled Workers	...	0	6	9	0	4	6	...	...	0	5	0
Women	...	0	5	3	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Open :													
Miners	...	0	8	0	0	5	0	0	5	0	0	5	3
Loaders	...	0	7	3
Skilled Workers	...	0	6	6	0	4	9	0	11	0	0	12	0
Unskilled Workers	...	0	5	0	0	4	0	0	5	0	0	3	0
Women	...	0	4	9	0	3	3	0	3	0	0	3	6
Surface:													
Skilled Workers	...	0	9	3	0	6	9	0	13	0	0	11	0
Unskilled Workers	...	0	5	3	0	4	3	0	4	9	0	4	3
Women	...	0	4	3	0	3	6	0	3	0	0	3	3

A general idea of the wage changes between 1880 and 1938 can be had from the following indices given by Dr. Kuczynski³:—

¹ Quoted by Wadia & Merchant, *Op. Cit.*, p. 484.

² *Annual Report of the Chief Inspector of Mines in India*, 1937, p. 6.

³ Quoted in *Our Economic Problem* by Wadia & Merchant, p. 485.

WAGES IN INDIVIDUAL INDUSTRIES (1900-100)

Years	Cotton	Jute	Railways	Mining	Metal workers	Building works	Plantations
1880-89	80	84	87	71	75	90	...
1890-99	90	87	95	81	89	89	100
1900-09	106	106	109	119	112	109	104
1910-19	142	128	139	176	138	133	122
1920-29	273	194	245	255	190	195	170
1930-38	242	148	286	191	171	168	121

As the above table shows there was a general rise in wages during and for some years after the First World War followed by a decline in the period 1930-38 probably with the onset of the great depression.

This, however, is no indication of the real wages of the workers. The increase in wages towards and after the end of the war, for example, did not compensate the rise in prices, so much so that in "the middle of 1920 the level of real wages was generally lower than before the war." Similarly in spite of all the fall in money wages round about 1930, the general level of real wages for industrial workers is probably higher than at any previous period¹.

THE FOLLOWING TABLE SHOWS THE MOVEMENT OF INDEX NUMBERS OF WAGE DURING 1939-43 IN BOMBAY CITY

	1939	1940	1941	1942	1943
January	...	110	110	124	173
February	...	110	110	122	175
March	...	110	110	124	177
April	...	110	110	125	190
May	...	110	110	128	191
June	...	110	110	135	197
July	...	110	116	147	198
August	100	110	119	147	199
September	100	110	118	148	205
October	100	110	115	150	207
November	100	110	116	155	207
December	110	110	118	162	...

The above statement represents the variations in wages in Bombay City Cotton Mill Industry. Since information on wages in

¹ *The Report of the Royal Commission on Labour in India, Op. Cit., p. 196*

other industries and other states were lacking. A comparison of this trend in wages with the cost of living index showed that "while wages and prices moved almost similarly during the first two years after the outbreak of war during the years 1942-43 wages have not entirely kept pace with the cost of living, although they have risen materially as compared to the pre-war month.¹ These conclusions based upon a study of wages in cotton textile mills in Bombay City can be applied to industrial workers in general.

Wage Trends in Plantations

The labour force in the tea, coffee, and rubber plantations total about 1.2 million, of whom about 45 per cent are working in Assam, 25 per cent in Bengal and 30 per cent in South India. Tea is cultivated practically throughout Assam and Bengal, while 60 per cent of the gardens in South India are devoted to tea. Since the industry is semi-agricultural, women workers number as many as men and children form 6 per cent of the work force.

System of Wage Payment

In the Assam tea gardens, payment of wages is generally based on piece rates. There are two systems, the older one is called the *hazira* and *ticca* system. Each man is allotted a certain task on the completion of which he earns his *hazira*. The task is generally so calculated as to take an average labourer about 5 hours. The task varies from place to place and depends upon the nature of soil and the working conditions of estates, etc., but the *hazira* rates are more or less uniform. When a man has completed his *hazira* he is free either to stop work or to continue if the garden is in a position to offer him more work. In the newer system (i.e. *ticca* system or also called the unit system) the labourer is not given a fixed task, but is paid according to the volume of work measured in terms of a unit. The unit is expected to be finished in one hour and the payment made for it is about one anna. In South India except for the harvesting of crop, other work is paid generally on time basis although the time rates are governed by a rough idea of task. Now in Assam no system exists except the standard unit system. *Hazira* at present means a standard basic wage while *ticca* refers to piece wages.² According to the Royal Commission on Labour in 1928, the wage for a male worker in Madras Presidency was 7 annas per day. In the Doars in Assam in the same period the wage for an adult worker was Rs. 14-4-1 per month, while in Darjeeling and Terai the rate was 7 annas 6 pies per day. There was an increase in the wage in 1929, but consequently the level fell. From the observation of the Rege Committee in 1946, it may be noted that the wage rate, in tea estates, generally speaking, was the same

¹ Price and Wages in Bombay City during two World Wars, *Indian Labour Gazette* Vol 1, No 10 April 1944, p. 250.

² Ministry of Labour. *Plantation Labour in Assam Valley*, pp 24-25.

as in 1928, that is 7 annas per day for men workers. According to Rege Commission, the average monthly cash earnings of settled labourers in 1944, were Rs. 9-10-3, Rs. 7-13-1 and Rs. 5-14-10 per man, woman and child respectively in Assam valley (In 1929 these were Rs. 14-1-5; Rs. 11-14-2 and Rs. 7-6-1). In Surma valley the respective wages for man, woman and child were Rs. 8-15-0, Rs. 6-3-1 and Rs. 4-3-4 (as against Rs. 10-3-11; Rs. 8-11-2 and Rs. 5-7-11 in 1929). The average daily cash earnings were Rs. 0-8-2, Rs. 0-6-10 and Rs. 0-4-8 per man, woman and child in the Assam Valley and Rs. 0-6-7; Rs. 0-6-2 and Rs. 0-3-2 in the Surma Valley.¹ The table attached will give an idea of the movement of wages (monthly) in the period 1929-44 in the tea garden of Assam and Bengal.

It will not be out of place here to mention that from its early beginnings, the plantation industry, especially in Assam Tea Gardens, it has been a traditional practice to supplement wages by what are known as concessions. These include provision of land for cultivation, (except in South India) free housing, medical attendance and maternity benefit, fuel, and grazing facilities and cheap food-stuffs and clothing and the sum-total of these concessions did make a substantial difference in the total earnings.

The Rege Committee found that generally speaking, the tea estates paid men workers 7 annas per day. The workers in coffee and rubber estates were paid a lower rate of wages, i.e. 6 annas per day. The rates for women were the same in all the estates being 5 annas per day. For children the rates varied for 4 to 4½ annas per day in tea estates 2½ to 4 annas in coffee estates and 4 annas in rubber estates. The rate of plucking was 3 to 4 pies per pound. In Mysore and Coorg for picking a bushel of 80 to 100 lbs the rate varied from 4 annas to 10 annas and 8 annas to 10 annas respectively. In rubber estates, tappers were paid on a piece-wage basis or on a combination of piece and daily rates. The piece-rate was generally 8 pies to one anna per lb. of dry rubber and the daily rate of wages was 6 to 7 annas.²

The Committee found that no dearness allowance or bonus of any kind was paid in Assam and Coorg while in Bengal and other areas of South India, it was paid. The rate, generally, was one anna per day for adult and half an anna for children.

This scheme of wages has undergone considerable changes in subsequent years. In 1946, the Indian Tea Association increased the *hazira* rates due to the rise in the cost of living by 2 annas for men and 1 to 2 annas for women. The issue was

¹ *Labour Investigation Committee Report*, 1946, pp. 259-61.

² Quoted in I. L. O's *Recent Developments in Certain Aspects of Indian Economy*, III, 1956, pp. 59-61.

Years	ASSAM VALLEY			SURMA VALLEY			BENGAL (DARJEELING)		
	Men	Women	Children	Men	Women	Children	Men	Women	Children
	Rs. as. ps.	Rs. as. ps.	Rs. as. ps.	Rs. as. ps.	Rs. as. ps.	Rs. as. ps.	Rs. as. ps.	Rs. as. ps.	Rs. as. ps.
1929-30	10 2 5	8 5 2	5 10 5	10 11 0	8 6 1	5 6 2	0 7 6	0 6 0	0 2 9
1935-36	6 13 2	5 10 4	4 0 2	5 2 11	4 0 1	2 13 7	...	...	...
1939-40	7 14 1	6 3 8	4 7 9	6 4 7	4 7 3	3 1 8	...	...	...
1943-44	9 10 3	7 13 1	5 14 10	7 13 7	5 10 6	3 12 10	11 3 3	8 13 0	4 15 3
1947	14 5 0	11 3 2	8 2 8	14 3 8	10 0 4	6 4 8	...	..	...

IN 1948, THE MINIMUM WAGES ACT WAS PASSED. WITH THE PASSAGE OF THIS ACT, THE MINIMUM WAGES WERE FIXED AS GIVEN BELOW.¹

Minimum Wages fixed for

State	Plantations	Men			Women		
		Dearness		Total	Dearness		Total
		Basic Wage Allowance	Rs. as. ps.		Basic Wage Allowance	Rs. as. ps.	
Assam	Tea	Rs. as. ps.	Rs. as. ps.	Rs. as. ps.	Rs. as. ps.	Rs. as. ps.	Rs. as. ps.
	(a)	0 12 0	0 5 0	1 1 0	0 11 0	0 5 0	1 0 0
	(b)	0 12 0	0 6 0	1 2 0	0 11 0	0 5 0	1 0 0
	(c)	0 10 0	0 5 0	0 15 0	0 9 0	0 5 0	0 14 0
Bihar	Tea	...	...	1 6 0	...	...	...
	(i) Ranchi	0 12 0	0 7 0	1 3 0	0 10 0	0 7 0	1 1 0
Madras	(ii) Purnea	...	...	1 5 0	...	...	1 0 0
	Tea, Coffee and Rubber	...	...	...	...	...	...
Punjab	Tea	...	...	0 11 0	...	...	0 8 0
U. P.	Tea	...	...	1 0 0	...	...	...
West Bengal	Tea	...	...	...	...	...	...
	(i) Dooars & Terai	0 12 0	0 7 0	1 3 0	0 10 0	0 7 0	1 1 0
	(ii) Darjeeling	0 8 0	0 7 0	0 15 0	0 7 0	0 7 0	0 14 0
Mysore	Coffee	0 10 0	0 6 0	1 0 0	0 9 0	0 4 0	0 13 0
Kerala	Tea, Coffee and Rubber	0 15 0	0 10 6	1 9 6	0 11 3	0 8 0	1 3 3

(a), (b) and (c)—Nawgong, Kamrup and North Lakhimpur, (2) Rest of Assam Valley (3) Cachar respectively.

¹ Indian Labour Year Book, 1953-54, (1955) p. 199.

discussed at a tripartite conference in New Delhi in 1947 as a result of which an interim dearness allowance of 2 annas per day was granted to the workers employed by the Indian Tea Association on the basis of a family budget survey held in 1947 on increase of 2 to 3½ annas for adults and 1 to 2 annas for children was allowed.

Early in 1953, there was a slump in certain sectors of the Indian economy, particularly in industries like plantations which depended on exports. More than 100 gardens were closed down in Assam and West Bengal. This situation necessitated a reduction in the wages of tea garden labour in these areas after consultation with the employer and labour interests the respective Governments revised the minimum wages fixed for plantation workers. The revision was effected through the discontinuance of the concessional issue of foodgrains. To compensate for this, additional dearness allowance was given at a rate of 1 anna per adult and ½ anna for child per working day at Cachar and 2 annas per adult and one anna per child at the uneconomic gardens in Assam.

The question of conversion of foodgrain concessions into cash was discussed at the fifth session of the Industrial Committee on plantations held in 1954. An agreement in this regard was reached according to which in zones I and II of Assam Valley 9 annas were added to the daily basic wage and cereals were to be sold at Rs. 20 per maund. In zone-II the addition to the wages was 8 annas and the price of foodgrains fixed at 17/8 maund. In Darjeeling, Dooars and Tarai, one concessional system is in force only to a limited extent and in Cachar it does not exist.

In January 1956, an agreement was concluded between representatives of workers and employers of plantations relating to the payment of bonus for the years 1953-1956. This collective agreement was important in many respects. It provided bonus for the first time to plantations in North East India and secondly the amount involved, viz. Rs. 60 million and the persons benefited, namely, a million workers made it one of the biggest bonus settlements in India. The agreement provided for bonus payment for 1953 and 1954 ranging from Rs. 27/8 to Rs. 65 in estates under 500 acres and from Rs. 65 to Rs. 130 in bigger gardens. A formula for determination of bonus in 1955 and 1956 was also agreed to.

It will be observed from the following statement that the wages of plantation workers have increased in recent years¹.—

Wages in coal mining industry are generally paid by the week, except in Raniganj where these are paid daily. Coal-cutters and loaders are generally paid "tub-rates" as a piece basis, while surface

¹ Quoted by I. L. O. Report, Op. Cit., p. 64.

AVERAGE MONTHLY CASH EARNINGS OF SETTLED LABOUR

Year	Assam Valley									Cachar								
	Men			Women			Children			Men			Women			Children		
	Rs.	a.	p.	Rs.	a.	p.	Rs.	a.	p.	Rs.	a.	p.	Rs.	a.	p.	Rs.	a.	p.
1938-39	7	15	3	6	7	5	4	9	2	6	5	6	4	5	6	2	2	2
1947-48	17	13	11	14	13	11	10	11	6	15	14	9	13	4	0	10	8	10
1948-49	19	4	3	15	3	4	9	7	0	15	13	1	10	9	6	8	3	7
1949-50	21	12	5	15	15	1	11	1	3	17	8	5	11	14	7	5	3	10
1950-51	20	6	11	17	3	9	11	10	11	16	8	1	15	1	4	10	6	10
1951-52	22	7	11	19	13	7	12	6	0	17	6	7	16	11	0	10	1	3
1952-53	21	1	6	18	6	10	11	8	5	17	1	6	16	2	6	10	1	3
1953-54	35	2	4	30	4	8	17	15	1	32	1	4	26	2	2	16	10	3

Wage Trends in Mining Industry

The mines in India employ about 600,000 workers of whom more than $\frac{1}{2}$ are employed in collieries. The following table gives employment in mines during 1953.—

Coal	...	341,193
Mica	...	21,744
Manganese	...	110,869
Iron Ore	...	30,396
Gold	...	22,884
Limestone	...	17,548
Others	...	36,107
Total	...	593,868

workers are paid on a time basis. The tub size varies from 20 to 42 cu. ft. and the rate for a tub of standard size varies from mine to mine.

According to the Royal Commission on Labour, the average monthly earnings of a coal-cutter ranged from Rs. 10 to 15 in 1931 in Bihar and Orissa. The daily earnings in Jharia varied from Rs. 0-6-9 for a woman surface worker to Rs. 0-13-6 for a mine working underground. In the Raniganj and Giridih coalfields, the rate was a bit lower. In 1946, the average daily earnings in Jharia varied from Rs. 1-8-3 for a miner underground to Rs. 1-7-9 for the loader underground to Rs. 1-10-0 for skilled workers on the surface. From 1943 onwards, to increase the coal production, food concessions the money value of which came about Rs. 0-15-0 to Rs. 1-11-0 per week were also announced. In general, by 1946, such statistic

as are available "seem to show that wages in industry have continued to be low for a member of years....and the present position is that in the principal coalfields, apart from a few concessions, the cash earning of a miner does not exceed Rs. 5 per week for about 5 days, work or about Re. 1 per day.¹

THESE CONCLUSIONS ARE BORNE OUT BY THE FOLLOWING FIGURES²

	Jharia			Raniganj			Giridih			Panch Valley		
	Rs.	As.	P.	Rs.	As.	P.	Rs.	As.	P.	Rs.	As.	P.
Miners-Underground												
1929	0	13	6	0	13	0	0	12	9	1	2	0
1936	0	7	6	0	7	3	0	9	0	0	12	0
1939	0	9	6	0	9	0	0	10	0	0	12	0
1942	0	11	0	0	10	9	0	13	0	0	15	9
1944	1	1	6	1	2	9	0	14	6	1	2	6
1945	1	2	3	1	3	9	0	14	6	1	4	9
1946	1	8	3	1	8	0	1	1	3	1	5	9
Loaders-Underground												
1929	0	11	0	0	10	3	0	12	0	0	10	6
1936	0	6	3	0	6	9	0	7	3	0	6	9
1939	0	8	9	0	7	9	0	11	9	0	7	6
1942	0	10	0	0	9	3	0	10	9	0	15	9
1944	1	0	6	1	1	3	0	11	9	0	11	0
1945	1	1	0	1	1	3	0	12	6	0	11	0
1946	1	7	9	1	6	9	0	14	9	0	12	6
Skilled-Surface												
1929	0	13	3	0	11	6	0	14	0	0	10	6
1936	0	9	3	0	8	3	0	13	0	0	9	0
1939	0	10	3	0	9	6	0	14	0	0	9	0
1942	0	12	0	0	11	0	1	2	3	0	11	6
1944	1	3	6	1	2	6	1	4	0	0	13	3
1945	1	3	6	1	3	9	1	4	6	0	13	0
1946	1	10	6	1	9	6	1	6	3	0	13	3
Unskilled-Surface												
1929	0	8	9	0	8	6	0	8	0	0	10	3
1936	0	5	9	0	5	6	0	8	0	0	6	3
1939	0	5	0	0	6	3	0	8	0	0	6	9
1942	0	8	3	0	7	3	0	10	9	0	7	6
1944	0	14	9	0	14	3	0	11	6	0	9	9
1945	0	14	0	0	14	3	0	12	0	0	9	6
1946	1	2	0	1	1	9	1	0	3	0	9	3

¹ S. R. Deshpande, *Report on the Enquiry into Conditions of Labour in the Coal Mining Industry in India, 1946*, p. 128

² I. L. O. *Ibid*, p. 81.

There have been two main wage revisions since 1944 first in 1947-48 (as a result of the findings of the Board of Conciliation) and secondly, in 1956) as a result of the All India Colliery Disputes Industrial Tribunal).

Basic wages. The basic wage rates fixed by the Conciliation Board Fact Finding Committee, etc., during the years 1947-48 in force in the different coal-mining areas. These rates are as follows:-

Bihar and West Bengal. Miners get a basic wage rate of Rs. 0-12-0 per tub of 36 c. ft. capacity. Time-rated men workers' (surface) get a minimum basic wage of Rs. 0-8-0 per day.

Madhya Pradesh. The coal-cutter receives a basic wage of 12 annas for every $33\frac{1}{2}$ c. ft. of solid coal. Loaders get a wage of 3 annas per tub of 33-75 c. ft. capacity and trolley men get a basic wage of Rs. 0-11-3 per day. Unskilled time rated workers wages are Rs. 0-8-0 per day for men and Rs. 0-6-0 per day for women.

Assam. Coal-cutters, Coal-pullers, Bhaskawalas, loaders and trammers get a minimum daily basic wage of Rs. 1-0-0 men and women time-rated surface workers get a basic minimum wage of 8 and 7 as. respectively.

Hyderabad. The minimum daily basic wages for underground mazdoors and for other time-rated underground workers amount to 10 annas and 12 annas respectively. The rates of dearness allowances in mines vary from state to state according to the percentage of basic wages and they vary from Rs. 30 to Rs. 50 per month as minimum besides bonus and food concessions have also been allowed at different rate. As a result of the new scale of basic wages and dearness allowance at enhanced rate, earnings of workers in collieries have gone up considerably. Thus the average income of a time rates workman in Bihar and Bengal has gone up from Rs 1-4 to Rs. 1-10 per day and of a piece-rated work-man from Rs. 1-6 to Rs. 2-4 a day.

In Madhya Bharat a coal-cutter, a loader, and a trolley man receives about Rs 2 Rs. 1-2 and Rs. 1-8 respectively besides an allowance of 6 annas as grain concessions. Similarly in Hyderabad the earnings of coal-cutter have gone up from Rs 1-14-0 to Rs. 2-8-0 per day and of surface workman from Rs. 1-7-0 to Rs. 2-4-9 per day.

THE INCREASE IN WAGES OF THE COAL MINER WORKER AS REFLECTED IN
TOTAL EARNINGS IS GIVEN BELOW

		Raniganj			Jharia			All-India		
		Rs. as. p.			Rs. as. p.			Rs. as. p.		
Underground										
Miners and Loaders										
1951	...	12	3	7	12	14	9	12	8	4
1952	...	13	3	11	14	0	7	13	8	3
1953	...	13	0	2	13	14	8	13	5	9
1954	...	12	11	3	14	4	1	13	6	10
Open Workings										
Miners and Loaders										
1951	...	11	14	9	10	6	2	10	9	6
1952	...	12	4	7	11	10	4	11	10	6
1953	...	12	12	11	11	10	9	12	1	11
1954	...	12	12	11	12	11	11	12	4	9
Women										
1951	...	9	11	1	7	10	8	7	11	6
1952	...	11	3	3	8	6	6	8	8	5
1953	...	11	8	6	8	11	4	8	15	5
1954	...	10	1	9	8	15	9	8	12	9
Surface										
Men										
1951	...	11	12	2	11	1	10	11	3	10
1952	...	12	14	1	11	13	6	12	0	8
1953	...	12	15	8	11	12	7	12	1	8
1954	...	12	4	7	12	10	8	12	7	6
Women										
1951	...	7	4	0	6	11	8	6	11	4
1952	...	7	13	10	7	12	6	7	7	11
1953	...	7	14	9	7	11	4	7	8	8
1954	...	7	11	7	8	1	8	7	10	10
Overall										
1951	...	11	7	0	11	2	3	11	1	9
1952	...	12	7	10	11	15	2	11	4	11
1953	...	12	4	11	12	0	8	11	15	6
1954	...	12	0	3	12	9	10	12	2	6

Gold Mining

BASIC WAGES AND DEARNESS ALLOWANCE IN THE GOLD MINING INDUSTRY
1954

Centre	Daily basic minimum wage			Dearness Allowance			Other Allowances
	Surface-		Under-				
	Rs.	as.	ps.	Rs.	as.	ps.	
Kolar gold-field	1	0	0	1	4	0	For daily-rated employees at annum closing point rise above 100 in the Kolar Goldfield cost of living index. Dearness allowance for 1953 and 1954 averages Rs. 40-10-0 and Rs. 39-0-0 respectively.
Hatti	...	0	13	9	1	1	2 Varies according to income groups, the minimum being Rs. 22-4-7 for these getting basic wages up to Rs. 34-7-0 per month.

Source . *Lab.ur Year Book* 1953-54, p. 195.

In gold mining industry in Mysore the wages have gone up considerably since 1944. The lowest basic minimum wage which was 8 annas per day in 1944, was increased to 10 annas and 13 annas respectively for surface and underground labour and was again enhanced in 1947. Up to February 1955 it was 13 annas and Rs. 1-1-0 respectively, with effect from March 1955 the basis wages have been increased to Re. 1 for surface workers and Rs. 1-4-0 for underground workers.

The industry in Kolar goldfield has been paying annual profit bonuses since 1947. Bonus paid for the years 1951, and 1952.

were equivalent to 39 days basis wages and $2\frac{1}{2}$ months basic wages respectively. The total average annual earnings of workers in Kolar goldfield for the year 1939, 1945 and onwards are given in the following table.¹ :—

Years	Rs. Total Average Earning
1939	319.58
1945	541.84
1946	563.35
1947	828.00
1948	767.89
1949	638.60 ²
1950	996.57
1951	1103.84
1952	1080.88 ³
1953	1137.91

Mica Mining

Minimum wage rates for workers in mica works have been fixed in the States of Bihar, Madras, Rajasthan and Ajmer, under the Minimum Wages Act 1948. The minimum wages (*i. e.* basic wage plus dearness allowance, etc., if any) thus fixed are Rs. 1-4-6 (factories) and Rs. 1-5-9 (mines) per day in Bihar, Rs. 1-4-0 (factories) and Re. 1 (mines) per day in Madras, Rs. 1-2-0 per day in Rajasthan and Rs. 45 per month in Ajmer. The rates fixed under the Minimum Wages Act for mines in Madras were subsequently revised as the result of an award of Industrial Tribunal. The award fixed the basic minimum wage at $8\frac{1}{2}$ annas per day and granted a separate dearness allowance, which in the case of those getting basic wage up to Rs. 30 per month amounted to 100 per cent of basic wages.

The average earnings of certain categories of workers in the Mica Mines in Madras and Bihar are shown in the table on next page.

It may be noted that miner's wages are low compared to those of the mill workers. The chief causes of low earnings of miners are :

- (i) Low tub rates;
- (ii) Deficiency and irregularity in the supply of tubs;
- (iii) Absenteeism;
- (iv) Overplus of workers due to the seasonal variations in production; and
- (v) the chaotic character of the coal mining industry and trade.

¹ Reduction due to 2 months strike during February and March 1949.

² *Indian Labour Year Book*, 1953-54.

³ Decrease as the 1950 bonus has been shown in 1951 earnings

AVERAGE DAILY EARNINGS OF WORKERS IN MICA MINES

		1950			1951			1952			1953		
		Rs. as. ps.			Rs. as. ps.			Rs. as. ps.			Rs. as. ps.		
Underground Miner													
Bihar	...	1	12	3	2	1	3	2	3	6	2	0	3
Madras	...	1	13	6	2	0	3	2	1	0	2	1	6
Unskilled Labour													
Bihar	...	1	4	9	1	7	6	1	7	9	1	7	9
Madras	...	1	6	6	1	7	6	1	7	3	1	7	3
Open-working Miners													
Bihar	...	1	8	6	1	12	6	1	11	6	1	14	3
Madras	...	1	8	9	2	2	0	1	6	3	1	10	9
Surface Skilled													
Bihar	...	2	1	0	2	6	0	2	4	9	2	6	3
Madras	...	1	9	9	1	13	6	1	10	5	1	12	6
Unskilled													
Bihar	...	1	8	0	1	10	9	1	11	6	1	9	9
Madras	...	1	4	3	1	7	6	1	5	6	1	6	0

Wage Trends in Industries

WAGES IN COTTON TEXTILE INDUSTRY

Cotton textiles, one of the most important industries in the country, employs about 855,726 persons. There are about 412 cotton mills in the country of which the largest concentration (180 mills) is in the state of Bombay, Madras, coming next with 87 mills.

During the period from 1921 to 1937 the Labour Office of the Government of Bombay, conducted six enquiries into the wages paid to the Bombay cotton mill workers, which showed that wages paid in July 1926 were the highest as compared with those paid at any other time prior to 1937. The figures showing the average earnings of cotton mill workers have been set out in the table on next page.

It will be seen that the workers getting nearly 16 per cent higher wages in 1942 as compared with those in 1926, which was the highest level of wages reached before 1937. There were considerable variations in the various centres of the industry, which have continued up to the present time. In 1944, for example, the monthly wages of two loom weavers was Rs. 75 in Bombay, Rs. 61 in Sholapur and Rs. 58 in Poona, Rs. 43 in Barsi, Rs. 26 in Gadag.

¹ *The Indian Labour Year Book*, 1953-54, p. 196.

² I. L. O., *Ibid.*, p. 65.

Period		Average Daily Earnings			Average Monthly Earnings 26 days		
		Rs.	as.	ps.	Rs.	as.	ps.
May 1914	...	0	10	1	16	6	0
May 1921	...	1	2	10	30	10	0
August 1923	...	1	4	2	32	12	0
July 1926	...	1	5	3	34	9	0
December 1933	...	1	1	2	27	14	0
October 1934	...	1	1	10	29	0	0
July 1937	...	1	1	6	28	7	0
February 1938	...	1	3	9	32	2	0
December 1939	...	1	5	9	35	6	0
August 1941	...	1	7	6	38	3	0
January-June 1942	...	1	8	9	40	4	0
July 1942	...	1	13	0	47	2	0

Information about wages in other centres before 1944 is scanty. The Royal Commission on Labour found wages in the Madras Presidency for weavers to be in the neighbourhood of a rupee and about 10 annas a day for male spinners. In Kanpur the wages were Rs. 33 for male weavers and Rs. 25 for male spinners per month. In the Punjab, Delhi and Bengal, rates tended to be substantially higher than in Kanpur.¹

The Regc Committee found in 1944 that in Bombay, the structure of wages in the industry remained practically the same since 1937, but for an increase in wages ranging from 9 to 14 per cent granted as a result of the recommendations of Bombay Textile Labour Enquiry Committee. As for other centres, in Madras City, a system of standardisation was introduced in January 1942 under which the minimum wage of a mazdoor was annas 12 per day. In Coimbatore the mills accepted the scales of wages suggested by the Madras Government. There was no standardisation of wages in any of the centres except Indore where the state introduced a scheme subject to the condition that mills paying more than the standard rate should not scale down their rates. Wage rates differ widely from mill to mill in the other centres. In Bengal, the basic wage for a doffer varies from about 6 annas in one mill to about 11 annas in another.

Dearness allowance as a substantial part of the workers earnings made considerable headway during the war. The average amount of dearness allowance per month paid in 1944 came to Rs. 31-5-0 in Bombay, Rs. 65-11-7 in Ahmedabad and Rs. 22-5-6 in Sholapur. In 1946 it amounted to Rs. 36-10-0 in Bombay

¹ S. D. Mehta, *The Indian Cotton Textile Industry*, p. 34

Rs. 48-10-0 in Ahmedabad. In Madras the D. A. amounted to Rs. 18-6-0 in June 1944 and in Madura to Rs. 24 per month. The Industrial Tribunal appointed in 1946 has, however, recommended the payment of D. A. at 3 annas and 2½ anna per point according to the locality.

There has been considerable improvement in the wage structure of cotton textile workers throughout India since 1944. In the majority of cases, the basic wage and dearness allowance of workers was fixed by industrial tribunals and adjudicators, etc., during the period 1947 to 1948. "In almost all these awards standardised rates of wages for different categories of workers were also fixed. Thus by 1949, the wage structure in most of the important centres had been established and no major changes have taken place in any of these centres, since then."¹

The table given below shows the minimum monthly basic rate of wages in 1952 and amount of dearness allowance (September 1954) in certain important cotton mill centres :²—

State and centre		Minimum basic wage (per month)			Amount of Dearness Allowance September 1954		
Bombay							
	Bombay city and suburban	...	30	0 0	66	2	0
	Ahmedabad	...	28	0 0	64	9	0
	Sholapur	...	26	0 0	50	1	8
	Baroda, Kalol and Nausari	...	25	3 0	58	2	5
	Surat	...	26	0 0	20	12	1
	Barsi	...	21	8 0	37	9	
Madras							
	All centres	...	26	0 0	44	4	0
Madhya Pradesh							
	All centres	...	26	0 0	40	12	2
Uttar Pradesh							
	Kanpur	...	30	0 0	49	11	0
West Bengal							
	All centres	...	20	2 5	30	0	0
	Hyderabad	...	26	0 0	50	13	0
	Madhya Bharat and Bhopal, Mysore	...	26	0 0	26	0	0
	Bangalore	...	16	4 0	40	14	0
			to				
			24	0 0			
	Rajkot	...	...		52	5	4
	Por Bandar	...	...		45	3	8
	Delhi	...	30	0 0	52	6	0
	Beawar (Ajmer)	...	25	0 0	26	0	0

¹ Labour conditions in the Cotton Mill Industry, ²Indian Labour Gazette, Vol XII No. 7 January 1955, pp 653-673

³ The Indian Labour Year Book, 1953-51, pp. 176.

Bonus

The practice of paying annual profit bonus to workers has also been in vogue some years now in many of the large units of the industry in different centres. The following table gives details of annual profit bonuses paid in important centres of the cotton textile mill industry in 1951 & 1952¹ :—

BONUS IN THE COTTON MILL INDUSTRY

Centre	Scale of Bonus for	
	1951	1952
Bombay City	4th of basic earnings	15% of basic earnings.
Ahmedabad	Do.	Do.
Sholapur	.	12½% of basic earnings.
Baroda	2 months wage to 23% of basic earnings	.
Madurai	3 months basic earnings	3 months basic earnings.
Coimbatore	(1) 3 months basic earnings 26 units	(1) 4 months basic earnings (5 units)
	(2) 2½ months and 2 months basic earnings in one unit each	(2) 3 months basic earnings (16 units).
Delhi Cloth Mills	3 months basic earnings (1951-52)	Do.
Bangalore (1 Mill)	25% of basic earnings	...

The data on earnings compiled from the returns received under the Payment of Wages Act 1936, given below shows the overall picture of the cotton mill workers' income position² :—

Year	Wages Bill (in lakhs of Rs)	Average annual earnings per worker
	Rs.	Rs.
1949	7,933	1,192.2
1950	5,996	1,161.7
1951	7,205	1,179.3
1952	8,103	1,258.8
1953	7,977	1,228.7

It may be explained that the fall in earnings in 1950 is due to general strike in Bombay and the sharp increase in 1952 accountable to bonus payments.

¹ *Indian Labour Gazette*, Vol XII, No. 7, pp. 668-669.

² I. L. O., *Op. Cit.* p. 69.

Wages in Jute Industry

As the largest earner of foreign exchange and as the largest employer next to cotton mill industry, the Jute Textile Industry occupies an important position in the Indian economy. Approximately 3,22,000 workers are employed in the jute mills, most of which are concentrated in the state of West Bengal.

Due to the fact that no thorough statistical enquiry was undertaken into wages in the Jute Industry prior to 1944, information relating to this period is scanty. According to a statement furnished by the Indian Jute Mills Association to the Royal Commission on Labour, the wages in 1929 in Jute mills varied between Rs. 2/12/9 and Rs. 8/2/9 for multiple shift 4 days' week, Rs. 3/9/9 to Rs. 9/5/0 for workers in the multiple shift 5 days' week and from Rs. 4/5/3 to Rs. 9/8 in single shift of 5½ days.

In 1944, the Labour Investigation Committee conducted a wage census in 35 mills covering 40 per cent of the total labour force. It found that taking all the workers in the selected occupations the basic wages per week of below 20·07 per cent lie within the wage groups Rs. 2/8 to Rs. 3/8 of 40·63 per cent in the wage groups Rs. 3/8 to Rs. 5/- of 33·47 per cent in the wage groups Rs. 5/- to Rs. 8/- and Rs. 9/- and over. A rough estimate of the average basic wage in industry in Bengal would be about Rs. 5/- per week¹ while there was no dearness allowance, or amenity allowance of, on the average, Rs. 2 per week was given. On the whole a jute mill worker in Bengal earned from about -/12/- as to Rs. 1-8. The earnings of about 44 per cent of the workers was less than a rupee a day.

Appreciable improvements have taken place in the wage structure in industry due mainly to awards of industrial tribunals. In September, 1948, a West Bengal Industrial Tribunal revised the entire wage structure and substantial relief was granted to workers. The Tribunal fixed the minimum total emoluments at Rs. 58/8 per month composed of a minimum basic wage of Rs. 26/- a month (26 working days) and dearness allowance of Rs. 32/8 per worker. Besides the minimum wages for other occupations were also classified.

The table on next page gives the Basic wages, Dearness allowance and Bonuses in the Jute mill industry, December 1953.

Wages in General Engineering and Iron and Steel Industry

The engineering industry occupies a strategic position in the Indian economy. It covers a wide variety of trades including iron and steel, mechanical and electrical engineering, railway workshops, dockyards, etc.

¹ Labour Investigation Committee, Main Report, p. 192.

State and Centre	Basic minimum wages per month	Dearness allowance	Bonus
West Bengal	Rs. 26 As. 0 Ps. 0	Rs. 37-6-0 per month (flat rate)	Nil
Uttar Pradesh			
Kanpur	12 0 0 (Approx.)	Rs. 49-4-0 ¹	N. A.
Madhya Pradesh	17 12 0	Rs. 32-8-0 Fixed	...
Bihar			
Katihar	24 6 0	Rs. 30-8-0 Flat rate	Nil
Andhra			
Nellimarla	} 23 0 0	Rs. 43-8-0 a Rs. 0-2-5 per month per point rise above 100 in Visakhapatnam cost of living index number	At 5/12 of total basic wages for 1951 and 1/5 of total basic wages for the year 1950.
Chittivalasa			

The progressive increase in the earnings of the jute mill workers is reflected in the following table¹:-

AVERAGE ANNUAL EARNINGS

Years	West Bengal		All-India	
	Rs.	Index No. 1939-100	Rs.	Index No. 1939-100
1939	235	100	231	100
1943	357	152	356	154
1944	366	156	363	157
1945	393	167	391	169
1946	431	183	425	184
1947	503	214	498	216
1948	645	275	638	276
1949	803	342	795	344
1950	807	343	807	349
1951	821	349	815	353
1952	917	390	905	392
1953	920	391	914	396

¹ Linked to Kanpur Cost of living index number at the following scale :-
 up to 200 points ... Rs 8-2-0
 201 to 300 points ... 1 pie per day per point
 above 300 points ... 1.2 pies per day per point.

² I. L. O.: *Ibid.*, p 74

Information regarding wages and earnings in this industry in the pre-Second World War is scanty, perhaps because the industry expanded to the extent of 80 per cent during the war period. The general average earnings of men in the Bombay Presidency in the industry in May 1934 ranged between Rs. 1-0-3 and Rs. 2-8-2 per day and Rs. 24-8-0 and 50-2-0 per month.¹

As for the iron and steel industry, in 1938, the "average wage earnings (taking all earnings into account) of the Tata plant are Rs. 42-63, if we exclude the employees drawing salaries of more than Rs 100 per month" as the table given below illustrates²:—

Year	Average earnings excluding profit sharing bonus	Average earnings taking all earnings into account
	Rs.	Rs.
1927	27-85	27-85
1929	35-35	35-35
1932	29-79	29-79
1933	35-58	36-54
1937	38-35	42-17
1938	38-78	42-63

The following table shows the daily average wages and earnings in important occupations in general engineering in 1944 (based on the Labour Investigation Committee):—

BENGAL			BOMBAY			MADRAS		
Wages		Earnings	Wages		Earnings	Wages		Earnings
Rs	As	P.	Rs	As	P.	Rs	As	P.
Carpenter	...	2 5 6	3 0 9	2 5 6	3 9 3	1 6 11	1 11 7	
Blacksmith	...	1 11 6	2 3 10	2 4 11	3 12 4	1 2 11	1 7 8	
Fitter	...	1 9 0	2 1 8	2 2 6	3 8 0	1 4 6	1 8 6	
Coolie	...	0 13 9	1 6 10	1 0 7	2 2 6	0 10 4	0 14 9	
Welder	...	1 9 0	2 2 10	2 7 5	3 15 5	1 14 9	2 4 9	
Turner	...	2 3 8	2 15 6	2 6 9	3 14 2	1 5 6	1 11 5	

The Rege Committee remarked that wages differed not only from industry to industry from also from state to state. Earnings had increased generally in almost all the industries since 1939. and this increase took form of both wages increase as well as bonuses and concessions or in the form of both.

¹ I L. O. *Industrial Labour in India*, p. 254.

² R. K. Mukerjee, *The Indian Working Class* p. 162.

The following table gives the Basic wages, Dearness allowance and Bonus in the Iron and Steel Industry 1953¹ :—

State and centre	Basic minimum wage per month	Dearness Allowance	Bonus
Bihar			
Jamshedpur	26-0-0	(1) For those earning up to Rs. 100 per month Rs. 15 + 10 % of pay (2) Those earning between 101-200 Rs. 19-8-0 + 10 % of pay	At months and 8 days' wages as bonus for 1951-52
Golmuri	35-12-0	In addition to food subsidy allowance of Rs. 17 per month (for married persons) is also paid	—
Bombay			
	30-0-0	1·9 pias per day per point rise above 100 in Bombay cost of living index	N. A.
Madras			
Negapatan	19-8-0	20 % of pay subject to a minimum of Rs. 35 p. m.	2 months' wages (for 1951)
West Bengal			
Burnpur	35-12-0	Rs. 25 p.m. (graded according to income groups)	2 days' wages for every 1% dividend declared

Wage Trends since 1939-1954 in important Industries

We reproduce the following table showing the average earnings of factory workers in different industry groups since 1939 to 1949²

¹ *Indian Labor Year Book*, 1953-54, p. 180.

² *Indian Labor Year Book*, 1949-50, p. 212

AVERAGE ANNUAL EARNINGS OF FACTORY WORKERS 1939-49

Industry	In Rupees				Increase in 1949 over 1939 %
	1939	1947	1948	1949	
Cotton	320.2	909.3	1,094.4	1,192.9	272.6
Jute	230.8	497.6	637.7	794.9	244.5
Engineering	263.5	698.7	879.4	938.1	256.0
Minerals & Metals	457.2	886.2	928.5	1,012.3	148.6
Chemicals & Dyes	244.8	592.6	663.8	721.7	194.8
Paper & Printing	332.7	728.5	835.5	911.5	174.0
Wood, Stone and Glass	194.2	495.4	572.0	615.6	217.0
Skin & Hides	285.8	603.9	841.2	889.1	211.1
Ordnance factories	361.9	755.2	918.0	1,126.6	212.1
Mints	367.4	1,071.2	1,378.2	1,437.2	291.2
Miscellaneous	281.2	663.1	979.0	876.7	211.8
All Industries	287.5	737.0	883.0	985.9	245.8

It may be observed that during and after the post-war period there had been a rapid rise in prices and labour, in the organised sector, and, therefore substantial increases in wages. With the end of the war in 1945, there was widespread agitation for higher wages among industrial workers. This trend received further impetus by the achievement of Independence in 1947 and the sympathetic attitude of the Government. Besides, wage revisions through Government conciliators' industrial tribunals and labour courts also helped to raise the level of wages. As a result of all these developments the average annual earnings of a factory worker in India in 1949 was nearly $3\frac{1}{2}$ times its level in 1939. There was a further increase of about 15% between 1950 and 1953, when the wage level showed signs of stabilising.

The following table shows the earning of factory labour¹—

ANNUAL AVERAGE (RS. PER WORKER)

Industry	1950 ²	1952	1954
Textile	971.4	1,122.0	1,089.6
Footwear and other	851.0	1,122.0	1,107.0
Wearing apparel and made up textile goods	602.9	677.7	746.1
Wood work	668.0	834.4	970.3
Furniture & Fixtures	910.0	1,019.3	947.6
Paper & Paper Products	962.1	1,155.8	1,214.1
Printing, Publishing & Allied Industries	640.7	718.9	815.4
Leather & leather products (<i>excl. footwear</i>)	1,164.6	1,331.9	1,335.8
Rubber & Rubber products	871.4	974.2	1,021.0
Chemicals & Chemical Products	1,047.2	1,156.7	1,339.7
Products of petroleum & coal	729.2	659.9	740.5
Non-metallic minerals	1,175.6	1,532.7	1,612.5
Basic Metal Industries	798.7	991.2	1,024.9
Metal Products (Ex : Machinery & Transport Equipment)	1,000.7	1,030.3	1,117.6
Machinery (Ex : Electrical Ma- chinery)	1,195.8	1,296.4	1,275.0
Electrical Machinery apparatus, appliances & supplies	1,052.4	1,670.9	1,392.0
Transport Equipment	1,014.8	885.3	1,162.0
Miscellaneous Industries			
Electricity, Gas & Steam	1,198.9	1,300.2	1,328.7
Water & Sanitary Services	951.8	973.3	1,045.6
Recreation Services	980.0	968.5	945.7
Personal Services	799.1	327.5	373.6
All Industries	966.8	1,112.2	1,111.3

System of Wage Payment

Labourers in a large number of factories are paid by piece work, e. g. in 1926, 48% of the workers in Bombay and 45% in Ahmedabad were paid by the piece work. In coal mines all the work underground is paid by the piece. In the railways the workers are daily-rated or monthly-rated, while in most other industries wages are paid by the time rate.

¹ *Monthly Abstract of Statistics*, Vol 9, No. 7-8, p 96.

² International Classification adopted in 1950

In almost all industries wages are paid 'in cash' and indirect payment is not common. The most important forms of indirect payment were practices connected with the truck system. In Madras some of the mine-owners were reported to be issuing orders on shopkeepers to supply provisions to the workers, while in some factories grain departments were opened where grain could be bought 10% below the market price. In these factories, wages were paid partly in cash and partly by ticket. Even now the Buckingham and Carnatic Mills in Madras maintain stores for the supply of provisions to its labourers and in Bombay too, about 40% of the mills under the control of the Millowners' Association conduct cheap grain stores, where grain is sold at wholesale prices for cash as well as on credit.

Under the Payment of Wages Act, 1936, no payment of wages can be delayed beyond one month and the common practice is to pay by the month. Unskilled and the casual workers are usually paid by the day.

Before the enforcement of the Payment of Wages Act delay in the payment of wages was common, and was a factor in increasing the indebtedness of the workers. The length of the time which lapses between the end of the period during which wages are earned and the day of payment varies in different states and different industries. While daily wages are paid on the day on which they have been earned, weekly wages are paid 2 to 5 days later, and before 1936 Act, monthly wages were paid from 10 to 15 days after the end of the month. The waiting period for monthly wages was often extended to a month. But now under the Act, wages must be paid before the expiry of the 7th day in undertakings employing less than 1,000 workers and before the expiry of the 10th day in other cases.

Fines and Deductions

The Indian worker is said to be irregular in attendance, careless of the employer's machinery and raw materials and finished products, and improperly behaved. For these reasons, he is usually subjected to imposition of fines and deductions from his wages, especially in the textile mills.

The fine is either fixed in amount or graded according to the degree of lateness. In many cases, the late-comer is not admitted, especially where labour is plentiful. Sometimes workers often absent themselves without notice. A fine equal to two days' wages for every day of absence is applied. Continued absence is followed by dismissal. Fining for bad work is frequently resorted to in the case of weavers who are required to purchase the cloth they have spoilt. Wages are also confiscated, in addition to summary dismissal, for forbidden conduct such as smoking in specified places,

But now the Payment of Wages Act lays down that fines can only be imposed for acts and omissions specified in the notices. They cannot be imposed on children under 15 and the maximum amount may not exceed an amount equal to $\frac{1}{2}$ anna in the rupee of the worker's earnings in any month. Fines must be recorded in a register, and the proceeds applied to purposes beneficial to the persons employed in the undertaking.

Dasturi or Commission

Dasturi is another kind of deduction from the wages. The jobber or the foreman by whom the worker is employed charges for the original appointment and collects something from the periodic wages by way of tipping. "Dasturi exists but cannot be proved. The lack of proof is not due to its non-existence but to the unwillingness of the individuals to disclose the details."

The amount of this commission varies from 1 to 10 per cent of the wages. The Royal Commission was informed by a women worker earning Rs. 3 per week in a jute mill that on her first employment she paid Rs. 4 as a bribe to the jobber and 2 annas per week out of her wage and that whenever she returned to work after a few weeks' absence she had to pay a similar sum (*viz.* Rs. 4). The Royal Commission observed in their report, "We were satisfied that it is a fairly general practice for the jobber to profit financially by the exercise of his power".

"The jobber himself has at times to subsidise the head-jobber; and it is said that even members of the supervising staff sometimes receive a share of the bribe."¹ The Commission therefore recommended that all power of engagement and dismissal of labour should be taken away from the jobber and entrusted to a labour officer, subject to the sanction of the general manager of the factory. It is painful to learn that though labour officers have been appointed in many industries, the jobber continues to be the chief recruiter of labour.²

In this connection, the Rege Committee observes, "In spite of the undoubted abuses of the system, it is not certain that Indian labour has reached the stage of development and mobility, where the intermediary for recruitment can be easily dispensed with; and under existing circumstances in the absence of alternative agencies, the jobber or his various namesakes have to be accepted as an inevitable factor. The jobber's close touch with the recruiting districts and villages, and his understanding and appreciation of the habits, hopes and fears of the workers render his position more

¹ Report, p 24

² Report of the Bombay Textile Labour Inquiry Committee, Vol II, p 33B,

advantageous as compared to direct agencies of recruitment, in view of the latter's comparative aloofness. It must be remembered that even Government had to seek the help of such intermediaries and pay them a commission in order to obtain recruits for military service or other employment projects."¹ But we would not be far from the truth if we say that so long as jobber and other intermediaries are employed to recruit labour, payment of commission and the resulting reduction in wages will continue.

Wage Policy

In spite of the increase in the money earnings, there has been little improvement in real earnings due to rise in the cost of living (b) the family income of the worker is inadequate to meet his needs and (c) the current standard of living of the Indian worker is very low. This in brief is the kernel of the wage question in India—an increase in real wages and an improvement in standard of living.

The state has taken on a new role in recent years especially after 1947, to safeguard and protect the weaker sections of the society including wage earners. Even though as early as 1931 the Royal Commission on labour in India had recommended the outline of a statutory minimum wage fixing machinery, it was in 1948 that the Minimum Wages Act was adopted. The only enactment till then was the Payment of Wages Act, 1936, which provides only for matters relating to protection of wages and prevention of abuses in the case of wage periods, delay in payments and deduction of fines. It does little help to the worker with no bargaining power to secure a living wage.² The Royal Commission on Labour, which had suggested the enactment also recommended the institution of minimum wage fixing machinery to be applied in the first instance to certain unregulated factories and workshops like tanneries, bidi making factories, etc.³ This recommendation was implemented by the Minimum Wages Act 1948 which prescribes that the Central or State Government shall fix the minimum rates of wages payable to employees employed in the industries scheduled in the Act and that the rates must be reviewed every five years. The industries scheduled include agriculture, woollen carpet making or shawl weaving establishments, rice, flour or dal mills, tobacco (including bidi making) manufactories; plantations; oil mills; employment under any local authority; road construction or building operations, stone breaking or stone crushing; lac manufactories; mica works; public motor transport; tanneries and leather manufactories. Such minimum rates of wages in respect of all scheduled employments are to be fixed within three years from the date of commencement of the

¹ *Labour Investigation Committee Report*, p. 80.

² I. L. O *Labour Legislation in India, 1937-52, 1952.*

³ *Report of the Royal Commission on Labour in India. Op Cit*, pp 214

Act, and in the case of employment included in the schedule by a notification under section 27 of the Act, within two years from the date of the notification. The Act provides for the fixation of a minimum time rate, a minimum piece rate, a guaranteed time rate, and on overtime rate appropriate to different occupations, localities or classes of work, for adults, adolescents, children and apprentices. The minimum rate may consist of a basic rate of wages and a cost of living allowance, or a basic rate with or without the cost of living allowance and the cash value of the concession in respect of supplies of essential commodities at concession rates or an all-inclusive rate wages are required to be paid in cash, although appropriate governments are empowered to authorise payment of wages either wholly or partly in kind in particular cases.

As regards the machinery for fixing minimum rate of wages under the Minimum Wages Act, the appropriate government may appoint a committee with Sub-committees for different localities to hold enquiries and advise it. For the revision of such minimum rates the appointment of and prior consultation with advisory committees and advisory sub-committees are obligatory on the government. An advisory board may also be appointed to co-ordinate the work of the various committees. All the above bodies are to consist of an equal number of employees and employers' representatives and of independent persons not exceeding one-third of the total number of members.

Some of the State Governments were unable to fix minimum rates of wages for the employments specified in the Minimum Wages Act by the stipulated date. To give some more time to them and to remove certain other difficulties, the Central Government adopted in May 1954, an amending Act to the Minimum Wages Act. The Act as amended provides that the appropriate Government shall fix the minimum rates of wages to persons employed in the employments specified in the schedules before 31 December 1954.

After providing protections against wages being pushed below a prescribed minimum, the Central Government took up the question of setting up machinery for the fixation of fair wages, as part of the problem of maintaining industrial truce and increasing industrial production. The Industrial Truce resolution adopted in 1948 recommended the establishment of fair wage-fixing machinery. In pursuance of the objective the Government of India appointed a Fair Wage Committee in 1948, which submitted its report in 1949. On the basis of the recommendations of this committee,¹ Fair Wages bill was introduced in Parliament in August 1950. The bill lapsed and was not taken up again.

¹ *Report of the Committee on Fair Wages* (Manager of Publications, 1949, p. 43).

THE FOLLOWING FIGURES WILL GIVE A BRIEF IDEA OF THE MINIMUM WAGES FIXED UNDER THE ACT FOR UNSKILLED WORKERS IN CERTAIN STATES¹

Industry	Bombay	Madras	W. Bengal	U. P.
	Rs. as. ps.	Rs. as. ps.	Rs. as. ps.	Rs. as. ps.
1. Rice, flour and dal mills	1 8 9 to 2 5 0	0 12 0 to 1 0 0	0 13 6 to 1 2 6	1 0 0
2. Oil Mills ..	Do.	Do.	1 4 9	Do.
3. Road construction building operations	1 12 0 to 2 6 0	0 13 0 to 1 4 0	1 4 0 to 2 0 0	Do.
4. Tanneries and Leather manufactories	1 8 9 to 2 5 0	1 0 0 to 1 5 0	1 15 6	Do.
5. Stone breaking or stone-crushing	Do.	0 13 0 to 1 4 0	...	1 0 0
6. Local authorities ..		25 0 0 to 40 0 0 (p. m.)	10 0 0 to 52 8 0 (p. m.)	17 8 0 to 36 4 0
7. Public motor transport	1 8 9 to 2 14 3	1 7 4 to 1 14 8	2 1 10 to 3 0 0	1 0 0
8. Tobacco manufactories (per 1,000 bidis)	1 4 0 to 2 8 0	1 2 0	1 12 0 to 2 4 0	„ (per day)
9. Mica mines and works	...	1 0 0 to 1 4 0	... 1 4 0	...
10. Plantations ...	..	1 0 0 to 1 5 0	0 15 0 to 1 8 0	1 0 0

¹ Report on the Working of the Minimum Wages Act, 1948, for the period from March 1948 to 31st December, 1953, p. 105.

Wage-Policy in Five Year Plans

The next milestone in the evolution of wages policy was the First Five Year Plan launched in the year 1950 to improve the standard of living in the country. The approach of the Planning Commission to labour problems rested on two considerations :—

(1) requirements of the well-being of the working class and
(2) its vital contribution to the economic stability and progress of the country. The plan recognised that any upward movement of wages, at the circumstances prevailing would jeopardise the economic stability of the country and lead to rising prices, but subject to this restriction agreed that wage increases should be granted under the following circumstances :

- (i) to remove anomalies or where existing rates are abnormally low ,
- (ii) to restore the pre-war real wage, as a first step towards the living wage, through increased productions. The restriction on wages was, however, linked with a limitation on profits.

The Plan laid down in detail certain considerations to govern wage-fixing during the plan period. It is significant to note that these considerations laid down that all wage adjustment should "conform to the broad principles of social policy and disparities of income have to be reduced to the utmost extent". It was also stated that the worker must obtain his due share of national income. Priority was to be given to those sections whose earnings were far below the living wage. The process of standardisation of wages should be accelerated and extended to as large a field as possible. The Commission also accepted the recommendation of Dearness Allowance Committee for merging 50 per cent of the present rates of dearness allowance paid to Central Government employees and suggested its extension to private sector also. Finally the Commission recommended full and effective implementation of minimum wages legislation and setting up of permanent tripartite wage boards to deal with all aspects of the question of wages.¹

It is difficult to assess at present the progress of the implementation of the First Plan. The wage fixing process in India, except for certain sweated employments which fall under the Minimum Wages Act, is not subject to direct state control. But, mainly through the awards of industrial tribunal and courts, a certain amount of upward revision and standardisation have been achieved.

The Second Five Year Plan's Policy on wages and labour has been framed in pursuance of the ideal of "socialistic pattern of

¹ *The First Five Year Plan*, pp. 583-585.

society" laid down by the Parliament. It accepted that a wage policy, aiming at a structure with rising real wages required to be evolved. Since one of the difficulties of fixing fair wages was the "drag" exercised by marginal units, it recommended amalgamation or improvement of the working of these units.

As regards "laying down principles to bring wages in conformity with the expectations of the working class in the future pattern of society", the plan, in view of the want of data, has suggested the conduct of a wage census, before any wage commission for the purpose of laying down principles, could be appointed. In the short run, simultaneous with wage census, an enquiry will have to be instituted for the reversion of the cost of living indices, since the dearness allowance "in a majority of cases has no relation to the cost of living indices at different industrial centres".

The plan recognises the inadequacy and unsatisfactory character of the industrial disputes machinery to settle, among other questions, wages, and has suggested tripartite wage boards for the purpose.¹

Conclusion

The wage question is of very great significance and importance to the working class. Any one incapable of maintaining himself and his family out of his income is bound to become discontented. There will be no peace in his mind and he would always aspire to overthrow the order which compels him to lead a life of poverty, degradation, and humiliation in spite of his hard work. Industrial peace cannot be maintained where workers are deprived of even a living wage. It would be anti-social and against all canons of human justice to accuse workers if they fight for wages sufficient to maintain themselves and their family. Industrial peace in India, as elsewhere, can be established only when the worker is contented and when his real wages are more. No talk, no programme, no appeal is likely to make him contented when he sees before his eyes his wife and children starving and going naked. To talk of industrial peace in such a circumstance is to plead for the perpetuation of exploitation, and persecution of labour. It is the duty of the employers and the Government that people get living wages. Industrial and enterprises not paying living wage are social parasites. We conclude this section by quoting the words of I. L. O. Report in 'Problems of Wage Policy in Asian Countries.' According to this Report, the objectives of State Policy in regard to wages should be:

- (i) To abolish malpractices and abuses in wage payment ;
- (ii) To set minimum wages for workers whose bargaining position is weak because they are unorganised or inefficiently

* *Second Five Year Plan 1956*, pp. 578-580.

organised, accompanied by separate measure to promote the growth of trade unions and collective bargaining ;

(iii) To obtain the workers a just share in the fruits of economic development, supplemented by appropriate measures to keep worker's expenditure and consumption goods in step with available supplies, so as to minimise inflationary pressures ; and

(iv) To bring about a more efficient allocation and utilisation of manpower through wage differentials and where appropriate, systems of payment by results."¹

I. I. O. *Problems of Wage Policy in Asian Countries*, 1956, p. 128.

CHAPTER IX

STANDARD OF LIVING

The economic status of any social group is determined by the amount of wealth and sources of income, social position, and the mode of living. This economic measure to a great extent determines the standard of living of any group or society. The mode of living in any country depends primarily on the fundamental factors of food, shelter and clothing, and an individual's power to get them. But in different countries this standard of living varies, due to the physiography of the various regions, racial characteristics of their people, and the differing values of money. Even in the same country the standard of living may vary from region to region and from one group to another due to occupational variation, social stratification and environmental life.

There are more forces than one which control and regulate the mode of living of any social group in a country. Since a society undergoes modification with every change in economic, social and political life, the standard of living of the people must necessarily change with each such modification. The concept of "standard of living" has, therefore, been elaborated by many economists and now its wider sense has become tinged with various social and psychological factors.

A "standard of living" is not the same as the actual manner of living of a class or a community. It is an attitude towards, or a way of regarding, a given mode of living. It is the "scale of preferences," the plan for material living, which directs our expenditure into certain channels, and satisfies our sense of propriety and decency as a mode of living.¹

The factors that enter into the concept of standard of living consist of the following elements :

(a) There are those elements which are essential as possessing survival value for individual life, food, clothing, and medical service ;

(b) The "conventional necessities" or "prestige values" which indicate the existence of social groups and have survival value for the group, like a clergyman's coat or the academic cap and the gown ; they are symbols to designate social status and enable the individual to identify himself with the group ;

(c) There are those further elements which represent the group concept of welfare, including values which mark the particular bias or interest of the group, whether puritanic or commercial.²

¹ Hazel Kyrk, *A Theory of Consumption*, p. 175

² *Ibid*, p. 212.

The normal standard governed by an average income is one which conduces to healthy and symmetrical development, physical efficiency and mental and moral growth of a person. That measure of necessities and scale of comfort which a person has come to regard as indispensable to his happiness, and to secure which he will make any reasonable sacrifice, is the true standard of living. It must be noted that the rise in the standard of living implies, "an increase of intelligence, energy and self-respect, leading to more care and judgment in expenditure and to an avoidance of food and drink that gratify the appetite but afford no strength, and of ways of living that are unwholesome physically and morally."

Rural vs. Urban Standard

The following points may be enumerated as the chief features of the rural and the urban standards of living :

1. The cash income and expenditure of farmers and peasants are low, because of the possibilities for direct appropriation from nature of many of the items in their living, such as food, fuel and house rent.

2. The single family dwellings, open air, healthy surroundings, and comparative safety for children, are things which may be bought in towns only by the expenditure of a large sum of money. The greater quantities of food consumed by farm families are difficult to evaluate.

3. As regards food consumption, rural classes need more food because they do more physical work and live outdoors. They consume more food in the course of a year, but it is of a poor quality. They eat coarse grains, pulses and occasionally vegetables, while urban classes consume more wheat, vegetables, meat and dairy products. Moreover, the direct consumption of food produced in the farms leads to a greater use of coarse food without much variety, while the urban classes have a variety of refined foods available with a higher vitamin content and sufficient calories. The table on the next page shows the proportion of food materials and calories in various working class diets in India.¹

Only a small amount of clothing is required in the country. Most of it is work-clothing which is standardized (a loin cloth) and is unaffected by changes in style and fashion. Rural people are satisfied with home-made things that do not involve much expense. Their clothing requirements are not only few but seasonal and periodical too.

¹ R. K. Mukerjee, *Indian Working Class*, p. 271

DISTRIBUTION OF QUANTITIES OF FOOD MATERIALS AND CALORIES IN
WORKING CLASS DIETS IN INDIA

(In Grammer)

	Proteins in	Fats in	Carbohy- drates	Total Calories
Indian Standard Re- quirements	85	60	605	3,000
U. P. Textile worker	90	45	530	2,800
Miner in Bihar	75.88	22	551.75	2,694
Bombay women mill worker	57	38.0	413	2,234
Bengali Cotton mill worker	68	45	401	2,340
Bengali Jute worker	66	41	526	2,752
Madras Coolie	68.7	7.2	789.2	3,326

Thus we find that so far as the physiological needs are concerned the average standard of living of the rural population is lower than that of the urban. Moreover, the urban families have a certain percentage of a greater net spendable income available for saving and non-physiological purposes like social and religious purposes, recreation, education of children, etc. The living of the peasants and farmers is inseparable from the business of the farm, because their surplus spendable income is first distributed between business and living expenses before the individual items of living are given preference. But urban business life and home life are widely separated. Because of these combinations the rural class has less incentive for saving and investment for rainy days. The same conclusion may be drawn from a comparison of the property accumulated by the rural and urban groups. Although the agricultural class is to a certain extent proprietorial, nevertheless the average wealth and income of the peasant proprietors fall much below that of the city proprietorial classes, their income being more nearly equal to that of the urban labouring classes. Moreover, the religious, political and recreational activities enter as items into urban budgets in a greater degree than they do into rural budgets, because people in rural areas have neither a surplus spendable income nor facilities for such thing. Therefore, we conclude that the proportion of budget expenses used for non-physiological purposes averages less in the country than in the city; hence, the pro-

portion of the budget expended for items of current consumption other than so-called basic necessities is the best index of the level of living.

Growth of Family and the Lowering of the Standard of Living

India stands at the bottom of the ladder in respect of the standard of living of its masses, when compared with that of the Western countries. India has such a low standard of living that it touches the minimum of subsistence. Sir John Megaw aptly observes :

"It is useless to tell people to drink more milk, or to eat more fruit and vegetables, unless we can show them how these articles can be obtained in addition to and not instead of the part of the usual diet. Already many people cannot get enough rice and other bulky cheap foods to satisfy their hunger. To suggest expensive foods to these people would be just as reasonable as the remark attributed to Queen Marie Antoinette who, when told that the people of Paris were clamouring for bread, was said to have replied, 'If they have no bread, why don't they eat cake?'"¹

In many parts of "Northern India, the industrial workers cannot afford anything more than parched gram and coarse sugar for the mid-day fare, the evening meal generally consisting of wheat flour, cakes and lent vegetables; oil, ghee and fruit enter but little into their dietaries. In the rice-eating areas, as Madras or Bengal, the position is not substantially different; a meal of cold rice with salt or breakfast, rice and lentils for mid-day and repeated at night; with very few vegetables, practically no fruit, milk or ghee."²

Very large numbers are unable to provide for the education or medical treatment while healthy dwelling-houses are rare, specially in the towns. A large number of artisans and labourers and even small cultivators possess insufficient clothing for cold weather, while in many parts of the country the food of the labourers is not sufficient to enable them to do a full day's work.³

The low standard of living in India is largely due to poverty, illiteracy, custom and fashion to which the masses are blindly wedded, and an unchecked population growth without a proportionate increase in the means of production, or facilities for migration and colonization. The restraining power of a high standard of living upon an increase of population has utterly failed in India,

¹ J. Megaw, *Social Service in India*, p. 210.

² Shiva Rao, *Industrial Worker in India*, p. 67.

³ Moreland, *Introduction to Economics*

where social customs and traditions, rather than economic postulates, determine the growth of families. This point of view was strong also among the early immigrants to the U. S. A., but a decline in the birth rate of their second generation was easily noticeable with the correspondingly large increase in the income of the family.¹ A similar decrease in birth rate in the 18th century in England, France and Germany witnessed a parallel advance in the high standard of living. But the rapid increase of population in India is due to the economic condition, the low standard of living and the exceedingly harsh economic exploitation of the people, to the social subjection of women and the resultant lack of education and perhaps, most of all, to the religious doctrine which enjoins marriages.² In India the rapid growth of population is discernible in the lower strata of society for it is a well-known fact that the tendency of multiplication is greatest when men have no stake in existence, where they have no prospects of improving their condition and where children if born would not be more miserable than their parents. Poverty accentuates the progress of multiplication; multiplication intensifies poverty. But when some chance of better condition is visible, when a better occupation, better education, some savings and some accumulation appear within reach, when it is seen that more mouths to feed mean a lessening possibility of utilising such an opportunity, then the propensity for multiplication is more and more held in check.³

A country has a higher standard of living when its people are prudent and restrain the inclination for family life until they may also gratify other reasonable wants. But a country will always have a low standard of living if the desires of its people are subordinated to the domestic instinct, *i.e.* when its people undertake the responsibility of a family before they are economically able to support it. Not only does a large family tend to diminish the volume of personal and social satisfaction which the parents enjoy, but an ever-increasing influx of rural population into urban areas pulls down the standard from the margin of existence to that of starvation. Moreover, an increasing army of proletariat render it difficult for the better class to improve their own standards, because "the standard of living of each man rises slowly, constantly sucked down by the lower standards of the masses."⁴ The enormous increase in the ranks of immigrants, unspecified and landless competing wage-earners, who are to a great extent unemployed or under-employed, have greatly reduced the standard among the masses of the working people in this country, without giving promise to improve their own condition. The difference in the size of the

¹ R. Jones, *The American Standard of Living*, p. 6

² Lydia de Vilbiss, *Birth Control*, p. 83

³ Taussig, *Principles of Economics*, Vol. II, p. 231.

⁴ J. R. Commons, *Races and Immigrants*, p. 112.

family tends to reduce the amount of spendable income per adult unit in the rural family. The average number of children per family in India is 4·5 against 4·3 in rural areas and 4·2 in urban families; and the proportion of the total number of children surviving per mille born, is appreciably higher in rural areas. It should be noted that an increase in the number of non-working dependents, specially in lower class rural families is a great drain on their family income. The ultimate result of this growth is that the proportion of the budget expended for the items of basic necessities like food, clothing and housing, is increased at the expense of non-physiological expenses like education, health and medical and recreation facilities. It should, therefore, be clear that a large-size family on the one hand, and the growth of non-working dependents on the other, without an increase, or proportionate increase, in the spendable income of rural classes, has considerably lowered their standard of living.

Family Budgets and Standard of Living

The family budget presents a picture of the economic standard of living of the family and also gives some index of those phases of living that may be called uneconomic in the sense that though they are not translatable into money, yet they serve to satisfy the desire of the family. It shows the sources from which income is derived and the purpose and channels of expenditure. Economists generally divide the nature and sources of income into wages and salaries of labouring classes and employees, interest and profits of capitalists and rents of landlords. The income of the rural class, with the exception of the hired labourer, represents a combination of almost all kinds of income. The net spendable income of the rural class is low, because of the possibility for direct appropriation of many of the items of living (such as food, rent and fuel from nature). Similarly, many items of expenditure do not enter into the budget. It is interesting to note that in Switzerland, 61 per cent of the total income of the rural families is in cash and the rest of the income is derived from natural products that are either given to them by their employers or are secured from their farms. Similarly in America, Hawltshorne found that 38 per cent of the farmers' needs were supplied by the farm. But in India the conditions are quite different. The agricultural serf gets only food and housing but no cash; the landless field-worker or the unspecified labourer receives cash wages but no allowance, while the cultivating labourer receives money income through appropriations from his farm.

The comparative figures of percentage of total expenditure used for different items throw ample light on the standard of living maintained by the working classes in rural areas. Below on the next page are given the family budgets of the agriculturists in South India.¹

* Thomas & Ramkrishnan, *Some South Indian Villages—A Re-survey*, p 395.

VADAMALAIPURAM

Items	Rent-receivers		Cultivating land-holders		Tenant-labourers	
	Rs. as.	Per cent	Rs. as.	Per cent	Rs. as.	Per cent
Food	639 15	59.1	302 0	63.6	125 15	78.8
Tobacco drink	64 15	6.4	30 13	6.3	8 10	5.0
Fuel and lighting	36 2	3.2	11 0	3.1	3 2	2.0
Clothing, footwear	181 2	11.9	38 0	7.4	11 8	7.1
Household utensils	10 0	1.0	4 9	1.0	1 1	1.0
Other items	201 6	18.4	88 11	18.6	9 13	6.1

A striking feature about the above budget is the large proportion spent on food by all classes. As income rises, the proportion spent on food falls. The working classes spend all their income on the bare necessities of life. Similarly, an enquiry conducted by Sri Deshpande and Dr. Ghurye into the economic condition of 145 families in four villages of Kolaba District also reveals the same sad tale that the larger portion of the total expenditure is devoted to food only. The authors conclude that there are reasons to believe that 56 per cent of the families live below the minimum level of subsistence, and that comforts are so few that they may be said to be non-existent.¹ Dr. Bhagat's enquiry in the Bhiwandi Taluka (Thana District) in 1938-39 into the family budgets of 527 families out of 760 in 32 villages is found to yield similar results. The families were divided into three groups according as they were (a) families possessing or cultivating more than 10 acres of land, (b) families possessing or cultivating at least 5 acres of land or having some other income, and (c) families which were either landless and subsisted on labour or cultivated insignificant plots. An analysis of the budgets of these three groups reveals the following results.²

¹ Quoted by Wadia & Merchant in *Our Economic Problem*, p. 237.

² M. G. Bhagat, *Farmer—His Wealth and Welfare*, p. 176

EXPENDITURE PER CAPITA AFTER REDUCING CHILDREN AND FAMILIES
TO ADULTS EQUIVALENTS

Items	A		B		C		All	
	Amount	Per cent	Amount	Per cent	Amount	Per cent	Amount	Per cent
Food	62 0 9	63.3	54 0 8	67.5	45 7 0	71.2	53 3 1	66.5
Clothing	10 15 0	11.2	8 6 0	10.4	5 8 7	8.6	8 2 10	10.2
Medicine	3 7 5	3.6	2 6 0	3.1	1 10 9	2.5	2 8 2	3.2
Religious Ceremony	1 12 7	1.8	1 10 1	2.0	1 7 9	2.4	1 10 8	2.3
Tea, Sugar Tobacco	11 15 0	12.2	7 13 5	9.6	5 8 4	8.6	3 2 4	10.2
Miscellaneous	7 11 8	7.9	0 9 0	7.4	4 4 0	6.7	6 0 1	7.6

Dr. Lorenzo also gives us the results of the survey of family budgets of three typical groups of agricultural labourer in Oudh.¹ The obvious conclusion he arrived at is that the agricultural labourers spend more than 60 per cent of their income on food, alone, whereas this figure stands as 39 for U. S. A., 55 for Russia, and 56 for Holland,² which is an index of the low standard of living of our workers. In the case of well-to-do tenants this percentage is not high as in the case of landless field-workers who stand on the lowest rung of the economic ladder.

Another important feature of these budgets is that in the majority of cases, the percentage of expenditure on physiological and basic requirements is the highest whereas the percentage of expenditure on non-physiological and secondary requirements is almost negligible. Moreover, the percentage of expenditure on non-physiological and secondary requirements is higher in the case of urban industrial workers than in the case of agricultural workers in rural areas, which again is a sure index of the low standard of living of the agricultural labourers when compared with their confreres in their urban areas as shown in the first table on the next page.

According to the findings of the All-India Agricultural Labour Enquiry Committee, the annual income per agricultural labour family was Rs. 447 and the average annual expenditure Rs. 468

¹ A. M. Lorenzo, *Agricultural Labour and Market Gardening in Oudh*, pp 63-65.

² Sorokin, Zimmerman & Galpin, *Systematic Source Book in Rural Sociology*, Vol. III, p. 372.

	Per cent of expenditure Physiological and Basic Requirements	Non-Physiological and Secondary Requirements
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Average Agricultural Labourer (Rural)	... 88.9	11.1
Average Industrial Labourer (Urban)	... 37.8	26.2

(including Rs. 7 incurred on ceremonies). There was thus a deficit of Rs. 14. An idea of the poor level of living can be had from the fact that out of Rs. 461 spent on recurring items of expenditure, as much as Rs. 393 or 85.3 per cent was spent on food and Rs. 29 or 6.3 per cent on clothing. The average annual expenditure on the rest of his necessities, *viz.*, shelter, fuel, lighting and miscellaneous items like tobacco, liquor, washing soap and medicine, etc., came to only Rs. 39 or 8.4 per cent of the total expenditure. The following statement gives the actual and percentage expenditure on consumption groups for the different zones and for India as a whole ¹:

AVERAGE ANNUAL EXPENDITURE PER AGRICULTURAL LABOUR FAMILY

	Income per family			Food		Clothing & foot-wear lighting		Fuel		House rent & repairs		Services & miscellaneous		Average Total debt per family	
	Rs.	Rs.	%	Rs.	%	Rs.	%	Rs.	%	Rs.	%	Rs.	%	Rs.	Rs.
Northern India ...	551	464	84.7	43	7.8	6	1.1	4	0.7	31	5.7	548	32		
East India ...	506	464	87.9	26	4.9	6	1.1	5	1.0	27	5.1	528	76		
South India ...	382	323	81.3	27	6.8	5	1.3	5	1.3	37	9.3	397	102		
West India ...	391	327	83.4	34	8.7	7	1.8	2	0.5	22	5.6	392	108		
Central India ...	417	374	87.4	26	6.1	4	0.9	1	0.2	23	5.4	428	103		
N.W. India ..	651	571	84.7	52	7.7	6	0.9	3	0.5	42	6.2	674	335		
All India ..	447	393	85.3	29	6.3	5	1.1	4	0.1	30	6.5	461	105		

This table also reveals that 44.5 per cent of the families (or 7.8 million) were in debt, the average debt being Rs. 105 per family. The main purpose for which the debts were incurred was consumption, which accounted for Rs. 78 out of the debt of Rs. 105. This shows the insufficiency of the income of the agricultural labour families to meet even their primary necessities.

¹ Dr. B. Ramamurti, *Agricultural Labour—How They Work and Live* (D. L. 261), pp. 31, 45 and 64-65

Agricultural labour forms an integral part of the rural population and as such their economic condition is intimately linked up with that of other rural families. In the following table a comparison has been made of the agricultural labour families with all rural families in respect of the level and content of their living ¹:

ACTUAL PER CAPITA EXPENDITURE (%)

Consumption Group	Agricultural Labour families (A.L.E. 1950-51)	Rural families - N. S. S. (1949-50)
I Food	85.3	71.4
Food-grains	4.0	47.7
Pulses	1.0	3.9
Vegetables	2.3	2.5
Edible Oil	0.7	4.1
Milk and Milk Products	1.4	8.4
Meat, Fish and Eggs	1.1	2.3
II Fuel and Lighting	0.8	3.5
III House-rent	6.3	0.6
IV Clothing and Foot-wear	6.5	13.4
V Services and Miscellaneous	6.5	11.1
Tobacco	2.3	1.9
Intoxicants	0.7	0.8
Total Expenditure	100.0	100.0

Judged by the per capita expenditure of Rs. 107 of agricultural labour families as against Rs. 204 of all rural families, the level of living of agricultural labour families is deplorably low.

Standard of Living of Industrial Workers (Family Budgets)

Let us compare the standard of living of the agricultural workers with that of the industrial workers. It will be found that the industrial workers are much better off than the agricultural population. On the next page is given the analysis of some family budgets of industrial workers in India :² (1943-46).

¹ *Ibid*, p. 41.

² R. K. Mukerjee, *Indian Working Class* (1951), p. 267.

FAMILY BUDGETS OF INDUSTRIAL WORKERS

(Figures within brackets indicate percentage.)

Centres	Average number of persons in the family	Average number of earners in the family	Average Monthly Expenditure					Clothing & footwear	Bedding & Household requisites	Miscellaneous	Total
			Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.	Food	Fuel & lighting	House Rent				
Jamshedpur	4.42	1.33	92 13 3	44 11 2 (65.76)	3 11 0 (5.43)	3 3 0 (4.69)	6 12 6 (10.07)	0 3 11 (0.36)	9 4 11 (13.69)	67 15 6 (100.00)	
Jharia	3.62	2.02	52 0 0	33 2 6 (77.70)	0 3 0 (0.47)	...	2 12 11 (6.56)	0 4 2 (0.63)	6 4 0 (14.54)	42 11 3 (100.00)	
Ahmedabad	4.33	1.55	134 5 8	50 9 9 (52.74)	8 10 1 (9.99)	5 2 11 (5.40)	12 0 2 (12.04)	2 0 4 (2.11)	17 7 11 (18.25)	95 12 2 (100.00)	
Bombay	3.96	1.53	97 2 3	44 15 2 (51.96)	8 12 8 (10.16)	6 3 9 (7.20)	10 2 2 (11.72)	0 6 10 (0.50)	15 15 5 (18.46)	85 8 0 (100.00)	
Calcutta	4.09	1.43	70 8 4	47 1 6 (65.66)	5 3 3 (7.28)	4 13 2 (6.71)	5 8 10 (7.74)	0 1 0 (0.06)	8 15 11 (12.55)	71 11 8 (100.00)	

Source:—The Indian Labour Year Book 1949—50, pp. 494—495.

A comparative study of the percentage figures in the above table reveals that nearly two-fifths of the families in Bombay, three-fourths in Ahmedabad, are in receipt of income exceeding Rs. 100 a month. The corresponding figures for Jharia and Sholapur are 3 per cent and 11 per cent respectively. Only 1·72 per cent of the families in Ahmedabad, slightly less than one-third in Bombay, two-thirds in Sholapur and more than four-fifths in Jharia are receiving less than Rs. 70 per month.

All that this table tells us is that taking an average income of Rs. 73 per month about 60 per cent of the income is absorbed in food which works out an expenditure of Rs. 44 per month for the family. If we consider the first four items of expenditure in the table the average expenditure amounts to over 75 per cent of the total income. If we include other necessary expenses like washing, bedding, and household requisites, the percentage will increase to 85 per cent. Thus the proportion spent on the necessities of life is an evidence of the inadequacy of the wages and the narrow margin between subsistence and semi-starvation.

The percentage of expenditure on the various groups among the workers in different industrial centres in India may be compared with that in respect of the working class family budgets in some foreign countries, a detailed analysis of which is given below¹:

ANALYSIS OF FAMILY BUDGETS OF INDUSTRIAL WORKERS IN SOME FOREIGN COUNTRIES

Locality	Annual	Food	Cloth	Rent	Heating	Misc.
China—						
Peiping	\$ 210	58·2	4·6	9·4	11·8	16·0
Shanghai	—	55·8	7·4	8·5	6·5	21·8
Japan—						
Land workers Average	.	41·2	7·0	15·2	6·0	29·7
Industrial workers	„	38·5	11·3	13·6	4·9	31·7
U.S.A. Farm families \$ 1983		39·5	13·8	11·6	7·2	27·9
Lowest bare existing	\$ 744	48·2	18·2	19·3	6·7	7·6
Great Britain—						
Agricultural Wages not exceeding		48·4	9·1	8·3	8·6	25·6
Industrial	\$ 250	40·1	9·5	12·7	7·6	30·1
Germany	—	46·6	13·5	10·6	3·8	—
Belgium		59·6	15·8	6·4	5·0	—
Netherlands	—	40·1	9·0	15·8	5·7	—

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 269.

In comparing the family budgets and standard of living of workers in different parts of India, it is necessary to ascertain to what extent the workers maintain dependents who may be living with them or away from them. The permanency of the labour force may be roughly indicated by the relatively smaller proportion of absentee dependents. As will be clear from the following table there are small numbers of absentee dependents in Madras, Coimbatore, Sholapur, Ahmedabad, Jamshedpur and Nagpur, which clearly point to the fact that workers have settled down in the industrial centres and have few relatives in the villages.¹

NO. OF DEPENDENTS

Locality			No. of families	Persons living in the family.	Dependents living away from the family	Total
Akola	...	...	315	5.08	.06	5.14
Ahmedabad	...	...	1,830	4.33	0.48	4.81
Ajmer	...	...	375	5.18	.03	5.21
Bombay	...	...	2,030	3.96	0.69	4.65
Calcutta	...	...	2,707	4.9	0.87	4.96
Cuttack	...	...	168	5.54	nil	5.54
Delhi	...	...	581	3.80	0.68	4.48
Dehri-on-Sone	...	...	231	6.07	1.20	7.27
Jalgaon	...	...	338	5.58	0.07	5.65
Jamshedpur	...	...	691	4.42	2.94	7.36
Jharia	...	...	999	3.62	1.75	5.37
Jabalpur	...	...	482	4.06	0.73	4.79
Kharagpur	...	...	222	5.62	1.00	6.62
Monghyr	...	...	578	6.80	0.11	6.91
Sholapur	...	...	778	5.39	0.14	5.53
Silchar	...	...	386	5.91	0.07	5.98

In all other cases, the workers have family relations in the village. This fact is shown from the table given next:²

¹ Compiled from Family Budgets of Industrial Workers Enquiry Reports 1943-1946.

² *Ibid*

PERCENTAGE OF FAMILIES HAVING

No. of families	One Earner	Two Earners	Three Earners	Four or more Earners	Total
Ahmedabad	58.69	32.64	6.70	1.97	100
Bombay	59.11	35.58	7.29	2.02	100
Calcutta	66.24	25.76	6.61	1.36	100
Cuttack	66.67	22.62	10.12	0.59	100
Delhi	71.40	23.80	4.30	0.50	100
Jalgaon	53.55	52.25	10.35	3.85	100
Jamshedpur	73.66	20.69	4.92	0.73	100
Jharia	26.23	52.55	15.42	5.80	100
Jabalpur	51.04	36.51	8.71	3.74	100
Sholapur	45.37	35.09	13.37	6.17	100

It will be evident from the foregoing table that the percentage of expenditure on such necessities as food and clothing in respect of the total family expenditure is far higher in India than in most industrial countries in the world. According to the well-known Law of Engels this is indicative of the lowest plane of living of the industrial workers associated with the greatest urgency of food requirements as compared with other needs of the family, *e.g.*, the percentage of expenditure on food and clothing is 60.72 in Bombay, 66.45 in Nagpur, 67.03 in Jamshedpur, 72.4 in Madras and 74.4 in Calcutta. Even in plantations and coal-fields the living standard is far lower as shown by the overwhelmingly high percentages of expenditure on necessities, 80.3 and 79.7 respectively.

Wages and Standard of Living

Information on the real wages of Indian workers before 1944 is lacking, in spite of the recommendation of the Royal Commission on Labour in India for the holding of family budget enquiries in all industrial centres. The Labour Investigation Committee observed on the basis of available information:—

“Taking a bird’s-eye view of the real wage position in the country as a whole, it appears that the lowest-paid unskilled workers have not suffered very much owing to the rise in the cost of living. In certain groups of organised industries such as jute, plantations, mining (excepting one or two sections) the real wage of the worker has definitely declined likewise, in the case of the relatively better paid workers, such as semi-skilled and skilled workers, the earnings have generally

lagged behind prices except in certain cases, where wage rates have also been increased.”¹

According to a Labour Bureau Study “index of real earnings was above its pre-war level in 1940 and 1941. It reached its highest level in 1940. A declining phase then set in 1942 and continued in the next year when the lowest level was reached. This was due to an abnormally large increase in the consumer price index synchronising with an increase of relatively much smaller magnitude in the index of gross earnings. There was then an increase in 1944 followed by a more or less steady phase up to 1946. During the years 1947 to 1951 the index of real earnings rose steadily save for a slight decline in 1950. In 1951, the index touched the level of 92—still 8 points lower than its pre-war level. The real advance came in 1952, when for the first time, after a lapse of nearly twelve years the index again overstepped the pre-war mark. The subsequent course of the index was characterised by a fall of about 2 points in 1953, when the index was almost at its pre-war level and then a rise to 102·7 in 1954”.²

The trend in real earnings based on the Index of Earnings and All India Consumer Price Index, worked out by the Labour Bureau is shown in the following statement :—

Year	Index of Earnings	All India Consumer price Index	Index of Real Earnings
	1939-100	1939-100	1939-100
1939	100	100	100
1940	105·3	97	108·6
1941	111·0	107	103·7
1942	129·1	145	89·0
1943	179·6	268	67·0
1944	202·1	269	75·1
1945	201·5	269	74·9
1946	208·6	285	73·2
1947	253·2	323	78·4
1948	304·0	360	84·4
1949	341·3	371	91·7
1950	334·2	371	90·7
1951	356·8	387	92·2
1952	385·7	379	101·8
1953	384·6	385	99·9
1954	381·2	371	102·7

Source: *Indian Labour Gazette*, Vol. XIII, No. 4 Op. Cit.

¹ *Labour Investigation Committee ; Main Report.*

² *Trend in the Index of Real Earnings of Factory Workers in India.*

Indian Labour Gazette, Vol. XIII, No. 4, October, 1955 pp 245-251.

Food and Diet

It is needless to mention that there is a great relation between the food and diet taken by the worker and his health and efficiency. When essential physiological needs are left unsatisfied industrial efficiency, absenteeism and occasional idleness as well as a high incidence of disease and mortality become inevitable. We shall, therefore, now study the consumption habits of the Indian working class as a whole.

A large number of surveys were devoted to the study of diets of the poor people from rural and urban areas : a few deal with low income groups in towns and still others with the diets of the middle class people. The groups of population dealt with, cover agriculturists, agricultural labourers, Harijans and backward classes, aboriginal tribes, factory workers, clerks, petty tradesmen and middle class families of persons engaged in numerous walks of life. In the following table are given the results of a few sample surveys conducted on people in villages in different states and on middle class people in similar areas¹ :—

MIDDLE CLASS DIETARIES

(in ozs. per consumption unit)

Foodstuffs		Punjab						
		Bengal	Bihar	Bombay	Gujarat	Madras	Hindus	Muslims
Rice	...	10.2	...	3.2	3.6	13.3	1.5	4.1
Wheat	...	3.1	18.0	3.2	5.6	...	10.9	11.6
Millets	...	.	...	0.2	0.8	...	...	0.7
Other cereals	...	...	...	..	...	0.8	4.5	...
Pulses	..	1.5	4.1	1.1	1.8	1.3	1.6	1.2
Leafy Vegs	...	0.7	1.2	1.8	...	0.6	4.0	3.0
Non leafy Veggies	...	11.6	5.9	3.2	7.0	3.9	4.5	3.0
Fruits	...	3.3	0.6	...	...	...	0.7	...
Oils and Ghee	...	2.2	1.8	2.9	2.6	1.3	1.6	1.4
Milk	...	11.0	4.1	7.6	10.6	...	10.5	7.0
Meat, fish, eggs	...	5.6	3.7	1.1	...	...	0.6	2.2
Sugar and jaggery	...	...	0.6	1.9	1.8	1.2	1.8	1.1

¹ V. N. Patwardhan, *Nutrition in India* (1952), pp. 140-141.

POOR INDIAN DIETARIES (1937-42)

(in ozs. per consumption unit)

Foodstuffs	Kashmir	Madras	Mysore	Baroda	M. P.	Bengal	Orissa	Bihar	V. P.	Punjab	Assam	Hyder- abad
Rice	25.6	14.0	2.4	8.1	26.4	23.7	24.6	20.1	6.8	..	19.0	0.9
Wheat	1.3	...	...	...	0.2	...	...	...	17.0	22.4	..	2.0
Millets	...	6.0	24.9	11.3	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	22.1
Pulses	0.6	1.4	2.1	4.0	1.1	1.4	0.9	0.6	2.4	2.7	1.0	1.7
Leafy Vegetables	5.2	0.3	1.3	...	1.5	0.8	0.3	2.0	1.6	3.3	0.2	0.2
Non-leafy Vegetables	1.5	3.4	0.9	2.6	3.1	9.2	7.7	0.5	2.3	...	3.4	0.8
Fruits	...	...	...	...	0.1	0.6	...	..	...	...	...	0.6
Oils and Ghee	0.9	0.5	0.1	0.7	0.2	0.6	0.1	0.1	0.5	0.4	0.3	0.6
Milk	2.2	...	1.9	2.3	0.2	3.1	...	0.1	6.4	2.4	0.5	2.1
Meat, fish and eggs	0.2	0.2	...	..	0.1	1.3	0.6	0.1	...	0.7	0.2	0.3
Sugar and Jaggery	0.5	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	0.2	..	...	0.6

A glance at the above table shows that the middle-class diet is relatively better in that it is balanced to a certain extent whereas no such balance exists in the poor man's diet. In the middle-class diets, there is a larger proportion of fats, milk, flesh foods and sugar. All of them are costly items in the diet and this explains why they are not included in the poor man's dietary.

Food energy is required for maintaining basal metabolism, *i.e.*, the functions of the body when lying *still* and *warm* and to supplement waste in specific dynamic action. The basal metabolic requirements of calories will, of course, differ in individual cases according to their size, as will be clear from the following table:—

BODY SURFACE AND BASAL METABOLIC REQUIREMENTS

	Height cm.	Weight kg.	Surface Area Sq. m.	B.M. plus specific Dynamic action
Public School Youth ...	180	71	1.88	1.870
Conventional mean man ...	171	60	1.77	1.770
Average Industrial Worker ...	169	61	1.69	1.694

Investigations carried out in India indicate that the B. M. R. for all workers range from 34.3 to 36.7 cal/M²/hr. for males and 30.9 to 35.1 for adult females.¹ This shows that the B. M. R. for an Indian is less than the corresponding rate for people in Europe. The cause of this lower rate may be due to climate, the very low proportion of protein consumption, or race or it may also be due to chronic underfeeding and universal malnutrition. In a warm climate like India, an appreciably low metabolism is accompanied by a low level of protein consumption. The calories which the Indian working man's diet yields hardly reach the level of those of the diet of the European working man. Mukerjee found that the Bengalee metabolism was on the average 9% below the Western Standard,² while Banerjee's investigations show that the B. M. of the peasants in U. P. is 7% below the English or American standards. Similarly, Krishnan and Vareed's investigations in S. India showed that the B. M. of men was 12% and of women 16% below the western standards. A description of the poor Indian dietaries cannot be complete without reference to caloric intake and fat and

¹ V. N. Patwardhan, *Nutrition in India*, pp. 122-123.

² H. N. Mukerjee, *Cal Medical Journal*, Vol. XX, pp. 425.

protein contents of their diets.¹ 139 diet surveys were made in different parts of India during 1937-42 (two of which were made in 1931) which included 3,250 families comprising over 14,000 persons of low income groups mainly of cultivators, agricultural labourers and agriculturists as well as petty tradesmen and industrial labourers. The findings of these surveys are :—

Calories². The average caloric intake amounted to 2,560 calories per consumption unit per day. In 92 surveys, the caloric intake was between 2,000-3,000 calories and in 28 surveys it was between 3,000-4,300 calories while 17 surveys have recorded intake of 1,100-1,500.³ The lowest intakes have been recorded in surveys

¹ Quantitative requirements are usually estimated in terms of heat units called calories. A calorie is the unit of heat necessary to raise one kilogramme of water by one degree centigrade. An expert Commission of the League of Nations (1936) has drawn up the following statement about energy requirements :—

(a) An adult (male or female) living an ordinary life in a temperate climate and not engaged in manual work is taken as the basis on which the needs of the other age-groups are reckoned. An allowance of 2,400 calories net per day is considered adequate to meet the requirements of such an individual.

(b) The following supplements for muscular activity should be added to the basic requirements in (a)

Light work : up to 75 calories per hour of work.

Moderate work : up to 75-150 calories per hour of work.

Hard work : up to 150-300 calories per hour of work

Very hard work : up to 300 calories and upwards per hour of work

² CALORIC CHART —

Ghee or Cooking oils	...	255	calories per oz.
Groundnut in shell	...	120	do
Sugar	...	110	do
Cereals & Pulses	...	100	do
Condiments	...	60	do
Dry fruits	...	50	do
Milk	...	20	do
Fruits	...	13	do
Goat Meat	...	50	do
Potatoes	...	16	do
Vegetables	...	6	do

³ The average value of 2,560 calories is low, but not very low when considered that it includes men and women of all ages engaged in different states of physical activity as well as children of varying ages. Aykroyd's estimate for an average Indian is 2,500-2,600 calories per day. He concedes that those who perform heavy manual work probably require about 2,800-3,000 calories per day, and if the agriculturist is to work very strenuously on his holding, he must have a correspondingly high caloric intake. Dr. Baljit Singh holds that 2,800 calories per average man daily should be the necessary minimum. According to him, the total number of calories available for actual consumption is estimated to be about 22% below the minimum requirements for good health.—B. Singh, *Population & Food Planning in India* (1947) p. 101.)

Continued on next page.

in Travancore and the highest in the Punjab. It may be mentioned that between 70-80% calories, and in some instances, more are derived from cereals and pulses.

Proteins. The figures for protein intake were available in 132 surveys. These yields an average value of 73 gm. per consumption unit per day. In 98 of these surveys, the protein intake has been recorded between 51 and 100 gm. In 17 surveys, it has varied from 20 to 50 gm. The bulk of the proteins in Indian diets is derived from cereals, pulses and other vegetable sources. About 40 surveys make a mention of animal protein in their diet of animal origin. Thus the intake of animal proteins is very much lower as the diets contain extremely small quantities of milk and milk products and flesh foods. It has been estimated that their proportion should be at least one-fifth and higher if possible, particularly during growth, pregnancy and lactation.

Fats. The figures for fat intake were available in 127 surveys which show an amount of 23.5 gm. per consumption unit per day.¹ Most of the fat is derived from the vegetable oils, milk, milk products, ghee or butter.

The chief sources of energy in the body are carbohydrates. In a diet which is mostly vegetarian as in India, there is an excess rather than a deficiency of these. There are certain inorganic mineral substances which must also be supplied in the diet in the form of calcium and phosphorus (and also iron), but Indian diets are very deficient in all these substances. In addition, different vitamins in adequate quantity should also be supplied by the food. But all of them are not available in requisite proportions and, hence, there is to be found a mild chronic deficiency existing in the population.

Thus it will be observed that "the inadequacy of calories, lack of proper balance and lack of uniformity" seem to be the three great alarming drawbacks of the Indian diets and these defects are rooted in the poverty and ignorance of the people, the social and religious prejudices against the acceptance of cheap animal foods like fish, eggs, meat. A close analysis of the peasant and

Continued from last page.

(i) It may be pointed out that the amount of energy used by different individuals is found to be proportional to the surface area of their bodies; and since men are bigger than women they require more calories than women and boys more than girls (ii) During the period of adolescence and youth more food is needed in proportion to the size of the body than when a man is full grown (iii) More calories are needed in cold than in hot climate and more in winter than in summer; and (iv) More food energy is needed in Northern India and wheat zones and smaller in South India and rice zones.

¹ According to McCarrison, 80 gms of fat is required for the boys-while Dr. Aykroyd holds that 40 to 50 gms. per adult per day shall be sufficient.

working class dietary in different parts of India shows that their diet is usually lacking in calories ; it is ill-balanced and bulky, as the following table reveals :—¹

—		Proteins (Gms.)	Fats (gms.)	Carbo- hydrates (gms.)	Total Calo- ries
Punjab Cultivator	...	120·0	70·0	560	3,440
„ Jail Diet	...	113·4	26·8	612·8	2,880
„ Cultivator (Barry)...	...	104·0	14·13	514·3	2,708
„ (K. Singh)	...	110·2	54·9	769·8	4,014
U. P. Farm Land	...	99·9	23·9	487·3	2,310
U. P. Mill Worker	...	90·0	45·0	530	2,800
Bihar Coal Miner	...	64·1	20·3	505·5	2,599
Bengali Jute Worker	...	66·0	41·0	526	2,752
Bengal Jail diet	...	93·3	39·4	693·3	3,508
Bombay Mill women	...	57·0	38·0	413	2,234
Madras Farm Land	...	58·32	2·7	536·8	2,222

The following table shows the average monthly food consumption per adult worker in India and some other countries :—

AVERAGE MONTHLY FOOD CONSUMPTION (IN KILOGRAMS) PER ADULT WORKER²

—		Cereal	Meat and Fish	Fats	Milk	Sugar
Bihar Coal-field	...	23·5	0·67	0·37	0·54	0·3
Dehri-on-Sone	...	24·16	0·45	0·65	1·62	0·1
Jamshedpur	...	14·3	0·76	0·76	1·99	0·8
Jamshedpur (Punjabi Worker)	...	20·7	0·19	1·13	4·28	1·54
Jamalpur	...	23·7	0·18	0·70	1·55	0·3
Italy	...	20·0	2·0	1·2	3·4	0·4
Belgium	...	16·7	2·15	2·38	12·09	1·25
Germany	...	11·0	4·7	1·4	14·0	1·5
Great Britain	...	8·1	5·8	0·8	10·5	3·3
U. K.	...	11·4	4·8	0·946	15·08	2·4

¹ R. K. Mukerjee, *Food Planning for 400 Millions* (1938), pp. 78—80.

² *Bihar Labour Enquiry Committee Report* Vol. II; and Tables given in *Workers' Nutrition and Social Policy* ; International Statistics of Food Consumption.

The following table shows the levels of consumption of various nutrients among the Plantation Labourers¹ :—

Nutrients		Level of Consumption	Per cent of the total	Recommended daily allowance by N. A. Committee
Calories	...	Below, 2000	48·4	3,000 for on adult work.
		2,000-2600	47·3	
Protein	...	2,600-3,000	4·3	82 gms.
		Below 60 gms.	76·1	
		60 to 80 gms.	23·9	
Calcium	...	Up to 600 mg.	89·6	1,000 mg.
		Over 800 mg.	10·4	
Iron	...	Below 20 mg.	74·8	20 mg.
		Over 20 mg.	52·2	
Vitamin B	...	Up to 250 I. U.	71·0	331 I. U.
		Over 350 I. U.	29·0	
Vitamin C	...	Up to 30 mg.	79·0	50 mg.
		Over 30 mg.	21·0	

This table frankly conveys the fact that the diets of the plantation labour in South India are extremely poor in quality and quantity.

The main defects in the Indian dietaries may be put as follows.² :—

(i) The fault of the Indian diet lies in its ill-balanced composition, *e. g.*, in the Punjab and U. P., Rajasthan and M. B., the unchanging combination is of wheat, jowar, bajri or maize atta and dal whereas in Bihar, Orissa and Bengal, it is rice and vegetables or dal; in Madras it is rice and tamarind juice curry and in Bengal it is rice, curry and fish. In each case more than three-fourths of the total quantity of food consumed by all the agricultural classes consists of these two only.

¹ Reconstituted from table No. III, in *Report on an Enquiry into the Cost and Standard of Living of Plantation Workers in South India*, 1948, p. 109.

² C. B. Mamoria, *Rural Dietaries in Rural India* (June 1951) pp. 236,

(ii) One of the greatest difficulties in India is to secure a sufficient amount of vitamin A, because the foodstuffs which contain most of this vitamin like eggs, oil-fish or fish-oil and leafy vegetables are not consumed by a majority of the rural and urban industrial population.

(iii) The bulk of our population is vegetarian. Meat, liver, and eggs are rarely consumed by our people. Inadequate use of these articles leads people to suffer from scurvy, anaemia, rickets, thin bones, poor appetite and bad digestion.

(iv) The calories and proteins obtained from the diet per person per day in India stand very low in comparison with other countries as would be gathered from the figures given below (1954-55) :—

DAILY PER CAPITA INTAKE OF CALORIES AND PROTEINS IN SELECTED COUNTRIES¹

Country	Number of calories		Proteins (in grams)		
	Pre-war	1954-55	Pre-war	1954-55	
Austria	...	2,930	2790	87	83
Denmark	...	3,420	3300	91	89
France	...	2,870	2785	97	96
W. Germany	...	3,040	2945	85	77
Greece	...	2,605	2540	84	80
Norway	..	3,210	3140	90	91
Sweden	...	3,120	2975	95	87
U. S. A.	...	3,150	3090	89	92
U. K.	...	3,110	3230	80	86
Italy	...	2,520	2595	82	80
India	...	1,970	1840	56	50
Pakistan	...	1,970	2190	56	53
Japan	...	2,180	2165	64	58
Egypt	...	2,450	2390	74	69
Turkey	...	2,450	2670	79	86
Australia	...	3,305	3040	103	91

	Pre-war	1952	Pre-war	1952	
Argentina	...	2,730	2800	98	98
Brazil	...	2,150	2355	68	57
Chile	...	2,240	2490	69	77
Peru	..	1,800	2080	55	54

¹ Eastern Economist—Annual Number, 1956, p. 987.

Incidence of Malnutrition

Food deficiencies may cause well-recognised deficiency diseases which do not invariably cause actual death or infirmity but are certain to lead to general ill-health, to increase greatly the susceptibility to many other diseases of infectious origin (tuberculosis, influenza, pneumonia, leprosy) and to impair efficiency and well-being of the masses. It also lessens strength, incentive and effective intelligence which are necessary for people to remedy their situation. Sir McCarrison has shown by a patient study how the stamina and physique of rice-eating population of Bengal and Madras are far below those of the Northern people who live on wheat, milk, fruits and meat. Faulty diet has a very great effect on body-building. An ill-fed child is often small for its age and its 'weight for height' is naturally below the average. It easily falls sick whereas a well-fed human-being has a glossy skin and a glow of health. Infants, growing children, expectant and nursing mothers are those who are most affected by deficiency diseases. They are often lean with sunken eyes and cheeks and occasionally having marked symptoms of anaemia.

(See next page Table).

Malnutrition raises death rate in two ways. In the first place, it gives rise to certain deficiency diseases and secondly it lowers the resistance power of our people to infection. It has been found out that in S. India, where milled rice is the staple article of diet, nearly all the pregnant females are in a state of avitaminosis B. As a result the incidence of premature births is three times as great as it is in Northern India, where wheat is the staple diet,¹ and in consequence the infant mortality rate also is many times greater in Madras or Bengal than in Punjab or V. P. Similarly T. B. is twice as prevalent in S. India as in the Punjab.

Investigations carried out in agricultural regions or ecological areas indicate that fecundity is reduced as a result of deterioration of the food position in the face of an acute pressure of population. During famines and wars, sterility in women and failure of menstrual functions have been recorded as evidences of malnutrition. Malnutrition due to specific deficiency in essential foodstuffs, such as calcium and vitamins, has direct effects in the reduction of fecundity. No doubt, the consumption of wheat (which contains vitamin B) is considerably reduced during a famine or a year of scarcity, while milk and milk products as well as some fresh vegetables (all of which are rich in Vitamin E, that has also been considered to have favourable effects on reproduction) are entirely eliminated from the diet. The general loss of physiological vigour

¹ R. K. Mukerjee, *Food Planning for 400 Millions*.

In the absence of sufficient supply of vitamins many deficiency diseases arise. The following table will show the effect of mal-nutrition due to lack of different vitamins in the food taken in the form of deficiency disease¹ :—

Vitamins	Found in	Deficiency Diseases
A (Xerophthol)	milk, eggs, butter, fish, liver-oil, leafy vegetables yellows, tomatoes, apricots, yellow peaches, bananas, cantaloupes, and oranges,	Retards bodily growth, affection of the eye, night blindness, Keratomalacia, skin becomes dry and rough, defective formation of gums, lesions in gastric mucosa and nervous system.
B 1 (Thiamin)	bran, whole wheat bread, grains, legumes, medj nuts, soya beans, yeast, fish, and oysters.	Impaired growth, poor appetite, dry skin, beriberi, affection of the nervous system and blood circulation, legs become paralysed and heart weak, epidemic dropsy, optic and alcoholic neuritis
B 2 (Riboflavin)	cheese, cream, eggs, fish, liver, bran, bread, prunes, spinach, strawberries, turnips	Loss of hair, and body weight and general weakness, eye trouble, soreness of mouth and tongue, and white patches at the corner of lips
G (Ascorbic Acid)	cabbage, cauliflower, grape fruit, orange, lemon juice, potatoes, liver etc.	Scurvy, anaemia, pain in joints and ankles, swollen gums and joints
D (Calciferol)	sunshine; beef-steak, butter, cocoanuts, liver, fish, oysters, other sea food.	Rickets (infants), osteomalacia (adult) tooth decay, lack of vigour, enlarged joints and curved spines.
E (Tocopherol)	cotton seed oil, corn oil, peanut oil, wheat germ, lettuce, other green leaves.	Low fertility, poor lactations, muscular weakness, impaired placental functions
Vitamin K	cabbage, carrots, greens, cauliflower, cheese, liver, tomatoes	hemorrhage, anaemia
Minerals : Calcium	Beans, cauliflower, cheese, cream, milk, almond, bread prunes, sardines	rickets, excessive bleeding, cessation of growth, nervousness.
Sodium Chloride	cheese, oysters, bananas	Loss of body weight, digestive disturbances, lack of appetite
Cobalt	liver, and other sea foods	Scaly skin
Copper	liver, fish, prunes, nuts	Anaemia, impaired, respiration, general weakness.
Iodine	cod-liver oil, fish, sea foods, vegetables, cereals, dairy produce	Sterility, lowered mental activity, coarseness of hair, goitre, overweight, and deformed body.
Iron	(peas, apricots, egg-yoke, liver, soya beans, turnips, fish, etc.	Low vitality, anaemia, pallid complexion, and retarded growth.

¹ C B. Mamoria, *Rural Diets in India*, June 1951, p. 239.

indirectly effects menstruation which leads to increase of abortion and diminution of fecundity.¹

The food shortage in India had been so acute that in normal years, where there are no apparent deaths due to famine or actual starvation, one-fourth of the children born die before the age of one year and only half survive up to the age of 20 years. Longevity is very much restricted and the average expectation of life at birth is as low as 32.45 years for males and 31.66 years for females according to 1951 census. Among the survivors the standard of health is very low while infirmity and deficiency diseases are quite common.

Not only that, under-feeding causes retardation of development, especially of young children, and develops symptoms of disease in fully grown adults. Dr. McCay observed some years back, "As we pass from the north-west region of the Punjab down to the Gangetic Plain to the coast of Bengal, there is a gradual fall in stature, body, weight, stamina and efficiency of the people. In accordance with this decline in manly characteristics it is of utmost significance that there is an accompanying gradual fall in the nutritive value of dietaries and more specially in the average level of protein metabolism attained by the people of the Punjab, U. P. Bihar and Bengal." Similarly, McCarrison supports the above nutritional generalisation. He made a study of the races of India and their diets and observed, "Nothing could be more striking than the contrast between the manly stalwart and resolute races of north—the Pathans, Baluchis, Sikhs, Punjabis, Jats, Gujars, Rajputs and Marathas—and poorly developed, toneless and supine peoples of the east and south—Bengalis, Biharis, Madrasis, Kanarese and Travancorians." This remark shows that malnutrition increases as we move from the wheat-eating areas of North, west U. P. and the East Punjab plains to the rice-eating areas in Bengal, coastal lands and Madras and so does the incidence of certain diseases as beriberi, pellagra, lesions, cataracts, dropsy, rickets and xerophthalmia.

Thus it may be noted that the fertility, resistance to disease, height, weight, general endurance, learning capacity and many of the qualities of personality are strongly influenced by diet in the sense that proper environment in relationship to the matters of diet and hygiene promotes the development of superior individuals.

¹ Spackman has estimated the abortion rate for the general population in India, at 10% of the total pregnancies. Reckoning the live births in India at 14 millions per annum and adding 2.5 m. for still and other such births, the total pregnancies would be 16 millions and total abortions 16 lakhs per annum. (quoted in *N. P. C. Report on Population* p. 64).

In determining how far the absence of certain specific food factors lead to diseases, one of the difficulties is that it is seldom possible to observe in man the effects of one food deficiency in isolation to others. Food deficiencies are usually multiple and the interpretation of their effects is usually complicated by the presence of various infections. Some symptoms, particularly those of a general nature occurring in the earlier stages of a deficiency disease, may not only be characteristic of the lack of a particular food factor, but they may well be the result of disease processes unrelated or only indirectly related to the dietary. For this reason the correct interpretation of the facts is a matter of much difficulty. Nevertheless, a considerable number of specific diseases are now generally recognised and it may be pointed out that faulty and unbalanced diets are as much responsible for disease and mortality as deficient or inadequate diets.

Basic Food Requirements

For normal growth and development, it is essential that right kind of food should be taken. Food must supply all the essential elements for the body. Protein, fats and carbohydrates are sometimes known as "energy-yielding food factors," since they are burnt or oxidized in the body to provide energy for the body. The proteins and fats should not be derived from any one particular source cereals or pulses—as is the case in most parts of U. P. Bihar, Rajasthan, Chota Nagpur, where the whole population depends on coarse cereals or rice taken with dal. There must always be a proportion of atta to milk, vegetables, dals, animal fats, and meat or fish. Proportionate use of these is necessary not only to give mineral salts and vitamins in abundance but also to supply enough cellulose for the proper action of the bowels. It should, therefore, be noted that a properly constituted diet should not only contain energy yielding foods like cereals—rice, wheat, barley, millets, maize, jowar, bajra, and oats, fats and sugar, but also protective foods like animal proteins as milk, milk products, fish, eggs, meat; vegetable proteins; pulses, peas, beans, lentils and nuts, mineral salts and vitamins, which are available from green and leafy vegetables, root vegetables, and fruits which protect the body from disaffection and disease and provide strength and health. Infants and growing children need relatively more animal foods and vitamins than grown-ups. Similarly expectant and nursing mothers have also their special requirements.

In order that the diet be wholesome and well-balanced to suit any regional conditions in different parts of India, not less than one-third of protein, and one-half of fats should be derived from animal sources or milk products and vegetables in purely vegetarian diets. In both cases the quantity of vegetables should be more than four times as much by weight as the amount of

non-cereal foodstuffs. When it is necessary to increase the energy value of the diet—so as to provide for hard labour and unusual activity—the amount of starch and sugar should be increased.

Kestner and Kinpping give the following classification of types of work and calories attributed to each¹ :—

Types of Work	Calories needed
1. Sedentary work	
Intellectual work, Clerks, Overseers Officials Employees ...	2,200—2,400 Calories
2. Muscular work	
Tailors, mechanics in light engineering, lithographers; type-setters, teachers, professors, speakers, overseers, small, traders, machine workers. ...	2,600—2,800 Calories
3. Moderate Muscular work	
Shoe-makers, book-binders, doctors, post-men, the majority of factory workers ...	About 3,000 Calories
4. Considerable Muscular work	
Metal-workers, painters, joiners, locksmiths, dyers and weavers. ...	3,000—3,600 Calories
5. Heavy Muscular work	
Brewers, masons, black-smiths, soldiers, agricultural workers, porters, athletes, textile workers, glass workers, wood workers. ..	4,000 and over Calories
6. Very Heavy Muscular work	
Agricultural workers, miners, quarry men, metal workers, (heavy metal trades), tanners, porters, stone-cutters, wood-cutters, dockers, navies. ...	5,000 and over Calories.

According to the findings of Dr. Reginald Passmore of the University of Edinburgh, the following table gives an interesting

¹ Quoted by R.K. Mukerjee, *Op. Cit.*, p. 198.

comparison of the relative energy expenditure to which adults are subject under various conditions¹ :—

1. Rest and Recreation	Calories per minute
Sleeping or almost sleep	... 0.7 to 1.2
Sitting at ease	... 1.4
Writing a letter	... 1.9
Listening to wireless	... 2.0
Playing Cards	... 2.1
Playing Bowls	... 4.4
Dancing	... 5.2
Cycling	... 6.2
Swimming, breast stroke	... 9.6
Ski-ing	... 14.5 to 17.9
2. Clerical work	... 1.2 to 1.9
3. Domestic work	
Dish Washing	... 1.4
Cooking	... 2.4
Mopping	... 3.5
Window-cleaning	... 4.0
Scrubbing-floors	... 5.2
Bed-making	... 7.6
4. Manual work	
Plastic-moulding	... 3.3
Machine Sawing	... 4.4
Coal-mining	... 5.0 to 10.5
Tree felling	... 8.4 to 12.7

The most important fact about these comparisons is that mental work definitely requires very little extra energy expenditure

¹ Quoted by *Hindustan Times*, Sunday Magazine, in *Human Body's Needs of Energy*, March 10, 1957, p 1.

beyond that which is needed to keep the body functioning without loss of weight in any given position or physical activity—running, lying down, sitting idle.

The following table prepared by the Nutrition Advisory Committee of the Indian Research Fund Association in 1944 gives the daily dietary allowances in terms of essential nutrients¹ :—

DAILY REQUIREMENT OF CALORIES AND SOME ESSENTIAL NUTRIENTS

Person	Nature of work	Net Cal-ories	Pro-teins (g)	Fats	Cal-cium (g)	Iron (mg)	Vita-min A (I. U.)	Vita-min D (I. U.)
Man (55 Kg or 120 Lbs.)	(1) Light or Sedentary work	2,400	82	Higher consumption of fats in winter	1.0	20	3000 to 4000	400 to 800
	(2) Moderate work	3,000	82					
	(3) Very hard work	3,600	42					
Women (45 Kg. or 100 Lbs.)	(1) Light or Sedentary work	2,100	67		1.5	30	3900	400 to 800
	(2) Moderate work	2,500	67					
	(3) Very hard work	3,000	67					
	(4) Pregnancy	2,100	101		2.0			
	(5) Lactation	2,700	112	than in summer				
Children	Under 1 yr.	100	3.5		1.0	10	3900	400 to 800
	1 to 3 yrs.	900	3.5					
	3 to 5 yrs.	1,200	3.5					
	5 to 7 yrs.	1,200	3.0					
	7 to 9 yrs.	1,700	2.5					
	9 to 12 yrs.	2,000						
Adolescents	12 to 15 yrs.	2,400	2.0		1.5	30	400	
	15 to 21 yrs.	2,400						

The information given in the above table can be interpreted in terms of common foodstuffs consumption per head per day thus : Cereals 14 ozs., Pulse 3 ozs., green leafy vegetables 4 ozs., Root vegetables 3 ozs., other vegetables 3 ozs., Milk 10 ozs., Sugar and Jaggery 2 ozs., Vegetable oil and ghee 2 oz., fish and meat 3 oz., and egg 1.

Drs. Patwardhan and Ranganathan enable us to compare a typical 'ill-balanced' Indian diet with a well-balanced diet.

¹ Quoted by V. N. Patwardhan and S. Ranganathan in *Nutritive Value of Indian Foods and the Planning of Satisfactory Diets*. (Health Bulletin No 23, Fourth Edition 1951.), p. 15.

COMPOSITION OF AN ILL-BALANCED AND AN IMPROVED DIET

Food	Ozs. per consumption unit per day	
	Ill-Balanced Diet	Improved Diet
Cereals	... 15 ozs.	14 Ozs.
Pulses	... 1.0 „	3 „
Milk	... 1.0 „	4 „
Leafy Vegetables	... 07.5 „	8 „
Root Vegetables	... 1.0 „	6 „
Oil & Fats	... 0.50 „	2 „
Sugar & Jaggery	... — „	2 „

The following tables gives the approximate chemical composition of the above two diets¹ :—

	Ill-balanced Diet		Dietetic Norm for an Adult worker ²		Improved Diet	
Protein	... 38	gms.	85	gms.	73	gms.
Fat	... 19	„	60	„	73	„
Carbohydrates	... 357	„	605	„	445	„
Calcium	0.16	„	0.68	„	1.5	„
Phosphorus	06.0	„	1.32	„	1.4	„
Iron	9.0	mg.	15	mg.	60	mg.
Vitamin A (I. U.)	500		6,000		5000	mg.
Vitamin B1	05	mg.	2	mg.	1.5	„
Vitamin C	1.50	„	60	„	100.0	„
Calories	17.50	„	3,000	„	2,795	„

It will be noted that the more well-balanced diet, containing less of cereals and more of everything else is infinitely more satisfactory in quality. In the opinion of a Nutrition American Expert a balanced diet should consist of as follows:—

1. One-fifth of Vegetable & Fruits
2. One-fifth of milk, butter milk, butter and Ghee.
3. One-fifth of meat, fish and eggs.

¹ V. N. Patwardhan, *Op. Cit.*, p. 18.

² R. K. Mukerjee, *Op. Cit.*, p. 201.

4. One fifth of cereals.

5. One fifth of fats, sugars, spices and catias.

Dr. Mukerjee suggests the following norms of nutrition for the Indian working class¹ :—

INDIAN DIETETIC STANDARDS

	Calories	Proteins in grams	Fats in grams	Carbo-hydrates
1. Northern India (wheat and legume eaters) ...	3,000	85	60	605
2. Bengal and S. India (Rice and legume eaters) ...	2,400	75	50	472
3. McCarrison's Standard ---	3,500	100	90	450

Clothing Standard

Clothing and Housing standards are also very low. These standards are largely a matter of social convention and considerations that vary widely according to the people and the region. India being a hot country, people generally use much less clothing than are normally required in countries of cold climate.

The figures of our annual per capita consumption of cloth, both mill-made and hand-made are very low. On an average one does not get annually in this country even cloth equivalent to two dhotis of 5 yards each to cover all the clothing needs. The lot of many must be much worse than this. Before war the per capita annual consumption of cloth was 16 yards. In 1948 it came down to about 14½ yards, which was reduced to 12.6 yards in 1949 and again to 9.7 yards in 1950. Average consumption of cloth in U. K. is over 40 yards, *i.e.*, four times that of ours; and in U. S. A. it is over 64 yards or more than 6 times that of our country. Moreover, people in these countries use large quantities of woollen, silken and rayon cloth, in addition to cotton textiles, and the actual supply of clothing material in those countries is far greater than a comparison of figures of consumption of cotton textiles.²

The National Planning Committee, however, set up the norms for clothing as 45 yards per annum per adult so as to include

¹ R. K. Mukerjee, *Food Planning for 400 Millions*.

² B. T. Thakur, *Economic Basis of Higher Standard of Living*, 1953, p. 28.

bedding, wrapper and headgear, etc.¹ The Planning Commission has suggested the per capita consumption of cloth should be increased to 18 yards by the end of the Second Plan period, as against 15 yards by the end of the First Plan period.

Housing Standard

Like clothing, housing accommodation in industrial centres is very awful. Considerable majority of the working population lives in single-room tenements with four to a dozen inhabitants each, e.g., the proportion of families living in single rooms is about 89% in Bombay, 73% in Ahmedabad, 62·5% in Kanpur and 60% each in Nagpur, Jabalpur, Akola and Gondia. In some cases the pressure is even greater. Under such conditions normal family life is impossible. Therefore, the housing standards needed for India should be such as subserve the basic needs of maintaining a thermal environment which avoids undue heating or heat loss from the body and providing adequate privacy for the joys of family life including the raising and rearing of children. The National Planning Committee had suggested a living space of 100 sq. feet per capita.

“It is interesting to note in this connection that the Australian Royal Commission on Basic Wage lays down the minimum of a four-room house as necessary for the working class. This is also the standard for the minimum house in the U.S.A.; 4 rooms: a living room, a kitchen, two bedrooms and a bath-room. In Great Britain the standard adopted is even higher. The density of houses cannot exceed 12 per acre, and it is laid down that for a normal working class family there shall be provided a dwelling containing a parlour, a kitchen a scullery, three bedrooms, and a bath-room in addition to the ordinary conveniences. In Japan, the houses having accommodation for one person of one or two rooms with a floor space between 79·3 and 133·2 sq. fit; and for two to seven person two rooms with a floor space of 133·2 and 239·8 sq. ft. have been provided. This arrangement is intended to meet the minimum requirements of the poorest classes of the urban areas.”² The ‘workers’ quarters apart from the rooms, include an equipped kitchen, drawing room, store room, a drying room, running water and gas installation.³ In India should be adopted a two-room tenement with a verandah as the minimum accommodation. In this connection it is worthy of note to observe what the Rent Enquiry Committee, Bombay said. This Committee recommended that the size of the room should not be less than 180 sq. ft. and should not accommodate more than 4 persons⁴. The tenements should not be built back

¹ *National Planning Committee, Report*, 1948 I, p. 80.

² R. K. Mukerjee, *Op Cit*, p. 205.

³ I-L O. *The Workers' Standard of Living* pp. 94-95

⁴ *Report of the Rent Enquiry Committee, Bombay*, 1939, Vol. I, p. 59.

to back and the alleys should be wide enough. Besides, there should be an adequate number of taps, bathing and washing places, latrines and urinals.

Indebtedness of the Workers

That the industrial workers are sunk deep in debt is a fact borne out by the observations of the Royal Commission on Labour. They observed, "We are satisfied that the majority of the industrial workers are in debt for the greater part of their working lives. Many are born in debt—many came to industry because they are in debt. It is estimated that in most industrial centres the proportion of families or individuals who are in debt is not less than 2/3 of the whole. We believe that in the great majority of cases, the amount of debt exceeds three months' wages and is often far in excess of this amount. A debt of even one-fourth of a year's wage is a heavy burden, particularly to a man whose income is little more than sufficient for his bare necessities. But the burden is aggravated out of all proportions by the rate of interest which has to be paid. A common rate is one anna in the rupee per month. This is 75% per annum."¹ "One anna per rupee is a conservative estimate of the average payment; one month's wage in the year is probably a more accurate guess, but whatever the figure, the result is almost invariable; the indebted worker has to give all of what might otherwise be his saving to the moneylender; and these payments are not merely the surplus that would be spent on petty luxuries, they have often to be provided by trenching on the primary needs of a healthy life."²

The statistics regarding indebtedness collected during the family budget surveys held during 1943-46 confirms this conclusion. In the industrial centres surveyed, the percentage of families in debt varied from 11.9 in Tinsukia to 85.7 in Sholapur. The average debt per family ranged from Rs. 28/8/9 in Jharia to Rs. 234/11/8 in Jamshedpur. In Bombay city 64.1 per cent of the sampled families were indebted and the average per family came to Rs. 123/14/7.

It may be pointed out that the low level of earnings of the worker is not the only cause of his indebtedness because better paid workers are often more indebted than the poorly paid ones. The percentage of families in debt at Howrah, Jamshedpur and Bombay, where wage level is comparatively higher than that at other centres, is not necessarily low as is obvious from the following table:—

¹ *Report of the Royal Commission on Labour*, p. 224

² *Ibid*, p. 226

INDEBTEDNESS AMONG THE INDUSTRIAL WORKERS

Centres	No. of families surveyed	No. of families in debt	% of families in debt	Average debt per family Rs. a. p.		
Ahmedabad	1820	362	19.9	---		
Bombay	2030	1301	64.1	123	14	7
Jalgaon	238	205	60.7	227	0	0
Sholapur	778	667	85.7	210	12	3
Calcutta	2707	1124	41.5	117	6	1
Howrah	1435	1008	70.2	---		
Jamshedpur	691	430	62.2	234	11	8
Jharia	999	223	22.3	28	8	9
Jamalpur & Monghyr	578	426	73.7	203	10	7
Akola	315	258	81.9	99	15	3
Dehri-on-Sone	231	134	58.0	157	0	0
Gauhati	241	32	13.3	197	1	5
Cuttack	168	52	31.0	169	0	0

That things have not changed since 1946 is indicated in a survey in 1954 conducted by the Lucknow University which showed that 62.2 per cent of 900 families surveyed were indebted and the average per indebted family came to Rs. 133-4-0.¹ A 1952 survey of indebtedness of textile workers in Hyderabad city showed that 87% of the sampled workers (300 out of 3,000) were indebted and the average per indebted worker came to Rs. 340.²

Much indebtedness originates from the worker's difficulty or impossibility of maintaining normally a balance between earnings and expenditure at the present level of prices. But a considerable proportion of working class indebtedness is due to injudicious expenditure on social ceremonies and festivals.³ The Rege Com-

¹ *The Statesman*, 1st August, 1954.

² The Hyderabad Government, *Bulletin on Economic Affairs*, July-August, 1954; pp 258-261.

³ R. K. Mukerjee, *Indian Working Class*, p. 288.

mission, summing up the analysis of indebtedness of industrial workers, observes, "In some cases indebtedness may no doubt be due to extravagance, vice and improvidence, but it would appear that the root cause of the evil is the want of any margin left for meeting expenditure of an unforeseen character. It is true that one of the main causes of indebtedness is the expenditure incurred on marriage, funeral, etc. The worker is a part of a social organisation and has per force to conform to certain customary social standards even when he is not in a position to do so."¹

Legislation to eliminate expenditure on births, marriages, deaths and other events in life is necessary to prevent the worker's indebtedness from being a drag on his efficiency, especially as he has to face unemployment due to strike or retrenchment and consequently to run into debt for maintaining his family if he has no land to fall back upon.

Conclusion

It may be observed that our countrymen are doomed to a low standard of living not only because of their poverty but also due to their ignorance. They do not have the capacity to marshal their expenditure wisely, thus failing to derive even that satisfaction which they can possibly get. In the words of Dr. Kuczynski, underfed, housed like animals, without light and air and water, the Indian industrial worker is one of the most exploited of all in the world of industrial capitalism."²

The inadequacy and injudiciousness of consumption of the people of India result in various evils. People who hardly get the bare necessities are bound to develop a weak constitution. They remain inefficient in their occupation and earn low wages. What more, they fall an easy victim to the various minor and major diseases, which either prove fatal or render them weaker still. Children and such physically bankrupt people are apt to be very weak and inefficient. Many of them swell the figures of infantile mortality, while the survivors are made worthless by the want of proper nourishment and sufficient clothes, of proper education and necessary training. When they grow to manhood they join the ranks of unskilled labourers. Their poverty leads to inefficiency, and their inefficiency to poverty. There is the vicious circle in which the masses of the country have been enveloped, and from which an escape must be made.

The standard of living of the masses can be raised only if we remove the basic causes of the low standard which have been pointed out above. The removal of poverty is, in fact, the most

¹ *Rega Committee Report*, p. 293.

² *Kuczynski Op. Cit.*, p. 137.

difficult problem to solve. Our economic machinery will have to be entirely overhauled and in many cases replaced, for only a bold step can break the vicious circle of poverty leading ultimately to greater poverty. Efforts should be made to remove the ignorance of the masses. Let the school-master be abroad, primary education be made compulsory, adult education be developed and arrangements be made for vocational training. Public health campaigns should also be carried on with a view to impress on the people the necessity of sanitation and cleanliness. The masses should be made to realise the value of a materially rich and full life and their hearts should be inspired to herald the Sun of Happiness.

CHAPTER X

EFFICIENCY OF INDUSTRIAL LABOUR

There has been a good deal of vague talk about the inefficiency of Indian labour and the blame has been put on him : 'He is inefficient ; the output of his work is considerably less than that of labourers in other countries ; he is incapable of sustained work ; he frequently absents himself from work and even when he is working he wastes a good deal of time in either idleness or in loitering. Discipline is unknown to him and he is hard to manage. He has very bad habits of living and any increase in his wages is likely to be spent more in absenting himself from work than in increasing his standard of living'¹ At the same time numerous comparisons are often attempted such as that an average Lancashire girl in a weaving shed can do the work of six Indian cotton mill operatives, etc. According to the Cotton Yarn Association Ltd., in a Japanese Mill 18 operatives look after 1,000 spindles, whilst in India 30 to 31 operatives have to be employed for the same number of spindles. According to Mr. N. H. Tata on the average the spindle operation ratio was as high as 22 workers for 1,000 spindles as against 6.7 workers in Lancashire and 4.5 workers in the U. S. A.² So also in respect of weaving 48 men are required to look after 100 looms in Japan, whereas 98 men are employed in India.³ According to 1926-27 Tariff Board on Cotton Mill Industry, each weaver in India on an average tended only 2 looms as against 2½ in Japan, 4 to 6 in the U. K. and 9 in U. S. A. This gives some idea of the relative inefficiency of the Indian worker. During the past few years the efficiency of workers in Cotton Mills has very considerably increased. The Working Party on Cotton Textile Industry (1952) found that in one mill in Delhi and two in Madras a weaver is working 4, 6, 8 and 16 looms and in one mill in Ahmedabad 18 looms and in one mill in Bombay 6 looms. This increase in efficiency has been due to the setting up of the automatic and modern machinery by these mills. But even today the efficiency of the Indian labour is lower than that of his counterpart in U. S. A and U. K.

In the Jute industry, it was pointed out in evidence before the Royal Commission that one foreign worker either in Dundee or on the continent has to do work that requires the services of two operatives in India.

In the coal mining industry, where wages are low and the workers are migratory and labour recruited from hill tribes, it was

¹ P. C Jam, *Industrial Problems of India*, p. 197.

² Quoted in *Economic Survey of Asia and Far East*, 1950; U.N.O. (1951), p. 71.

³ Wadia & Merchant, *Our Economic Problem*, 1954, p. 544.

found that in India 131 tons of Coal were produced per annum per worker, in America 780 tons, in U. K. 250 tons and in Transvaal 426 tons¹. More recently, it was pointed out by the President of the Geological, Mining and Metallurgical Society of India (at its 28th Annual General Meeting) that the output per man-shift in India is only 2.7 tons as against 6.29 tons in U. K., 8.99 tons in Germany and 21.68 tons in the U. S. A. According to the Planning Commission, (1951), although in the Coal mining industry the number of workers employed increased from 214,244 in 1941 to 340,000 in 1951, and the production of coal increased from 25.89 million tons to 34.0 million tons, yet there was a decline in the output per man-year from about 127 tons in 1941 to a little over 100 tons in 1951.²

In the Iron and Steel industry, the Indian worker was said to be not so strong physically as the European workman, and it was pointed out that the TISCO employed, in relation to output a far greater number of workmen than similar plants did in Western countries. According to Shri J. R. D. Tata, the output per worker in 1949 was half a ton a month as compared with an average of 5 tons a month per worker in the U. S. A. steel industry.

Although detailed information for all the industries is not available, yet it has been estimated that the man-hour output in the industries taken together has considerably declined between 1942 and 1952, and in some cases this fall in productivity has been from 30 to 50%. This is a clear evidence of the inefficiency of our labourers.

On the other hand, we have Sir Thomas Holland bearing testimony to the superior efficiency of the Indian workers. "With Indian labour you can tackle any industry for which the country is suitable. I have seen labourers at Jamshedpur, who only a few years ago were in the Jungles of the Santbals without any education. They were now handling red-hot steel bars, turning out rails, wheels and angles of iron as efficiently as you can get it done by an English labourer³." Similarly a few years ago, the General Manager of the General Motors Ltd., Bombay stated that given the preliminary training, an individual Indian worker was as efficient as an average American worker. The principal engineer of the Grady Mission, 1942, discovered that the Indian workers earning 65 cents a day in poorly lighted factories were turning out excellent machine tools, and that productivity per man in Tata works was as high as the productivity of American workers in similar Mills in Pittsburg⁴. In fact in this country, very few time and efficiency tests

¹ *Report of Royal Commission on Labour*, Vol. IV, Pt. I, p. 234.

² *The First Five Year Plan*, 1931, p. 390-91.

³ *Goody Mission's Report on the Technical Efficiency of Indian Industries*.

⁴ Michael Straight, *Make This the Last War*, 1943, pp. 131-32.

are taken in order to ascertain the efficiency of the worker. If all these charges are correct then it seems almost impossible to become an efficient industrial country to any considerable extent. It is highly regrettable that very little effort is being made to really found out why an Indian worker is guilty of all these charges. When we look behind the scene we find a very gloomy picture indeed. The Indian labourer lives in insanitary, overcrowded mud-hovels, his diet is far from satisfactory, his dress is less than adequate and he is indebted beyond his means. A stage is very soon reached in his life when he no longer works for himself but for his creditors and life soon becomes such a monotony that he ceases to take any interest and even the worst is good for him. In fact no one is born inefficient, provided there is no constitutional defect in him. It is the environment that makes him inefficient. In order to find out and understand the causes of such situation we have to study the environment under which the labourers pass their time. For as even the orthodox economists have now come to realise, labour is not only an instrument of production, it has its own human and social worth, so that no economic progress is worth the name which does not raise the standard of comfort.

The chief reasons for the low efficiency of the industrial workers are :—

1. Bad Housing Conditions and Overcrowding

The housing conditions in most industrial areas is terrible, the congestion unbelievable, and the lack of fresh air and light very striking. Limitation of space and high land values are responsible for much of the congestion in the big cities. This results in heavy rents.¹ Sometimes the house rent alone absorbs 15 to 25% of the total income of the worker. In investigations made in Sholapur and Ahmedabad made by Bombay Labour Office, it was found that a very large proportion of the income of the workers, viz. 85% is spent on the primary necessities of life such as food, fuel, lighting, clothing and house rent. Besides all workers have to spend on washing, the barber, the household utensils, sickness and the event of life, such as births, marriages and deaths, not to speak of the expenditure dictated by religious and social customs. Finally they have to pay debt charges and expenses of periodical travels to and from their villages. If anything remains after all these charges are paid it is spent on a few pleasures that are available to the uneducated. This shows that after paying off all the above charges very little is left with him for his additional needs.

¹ During the year ending March 1950, 1185 tenements were constructed at Bombay, Ahmedabad and Sholapur for industrial workers. The following table shows the number and type of tenements and the subsidised monthly rent :—

For a labourer coming from a village where he seldom pays any rent this seems very onerous to him to pay heavy rent charges and, hence, in order to economise in rent he invites others to share his small room with him. This has resulted in very serious overcrowding. An enquiry was made in Bombay in 1931 and it was found that in 1929, 89% of the workers lived in single rooms in Bombay; 73% on Ahmedabad in 1926; 72% in Kanpur and 60% in Nagpur in 1930. In a room by 10' x 9' on an average 4.9 persons were living in some areas the number was as high as 12 persons per room. This contrast becomes more vivid when we compare the living conditions of Indian workers with English workers. In London 6% of the total working population live in one room with an average of 1.92 persons in such rooms. Such an overcrowding has led to a shocking state of affairs. This has resulted in heavy general as well as infantile mortality which takes a heavy toll of the workers. The rates of mortality varies inversely with the number of rooms in the dwelling place. The highest rate reached in the worst localities is 298 per thousand registered births as against the average rate of 200 to 250 for general population.

With regard to health conditions amongst industrial workers the Bhoré Committee had pointed out that, "the machinery for providing such information does not exist at present". Prof. Adarker collected data with regard to sickness and absenteeism from some firms. These show that about 6 to 14 per cent of the workers fell sick and each sickness resulted in 8 to 4 days of absence from work. Thus the workers in India are housed like animals without light, air and water."

Improved housing is the first step towards an improvement of the standards of living, behaviour and morale of the Indian industrial worker. With all these will come the conquest of preventible diseases and mortality and improvement of health and output.

2. Poverty and Low Standard of Living

The poverty of the Indian masses is proverbial. "There is a vast amount of what can only be termed dangerous poverty — poverty

Location Bombay	No. of tenements	Type	Rent
Worli Hill	192	Two Rooms	37/-
Sewree	252	One room, one Kitchen	20/-
Wadala	54	One room, one Kitchen	34/-
Ahmedabad	236	Two rooms	23/-
Sholapur	252	Two rooms	—
	17	Hostel	—
	27	Three Rooms	—

(—) Rent not fixed

Our Economic Problems by Wadia & Merchant, p. 179.

that is to say of such kind that those subject to it live in the very margin of subsistence.”¹ Due to poverty the people cannot take nutritious diet and for this reason the food of the vast majority of the workers is very poor consisting entirely of rice, millets or wheat of inferior qualities and a little pulse, oil and spices with little or no milk, ghee or green vegetables. The Family Budgets of Industrial Workers Enquiry Reports gives us an idea that for an average family consisting of four persons, expenditure on food per capita every month comes to about Rs. 10-8-0 against a minimum expenditure of Rs 14/- p.m on food alone as laid down in Diet Charts. Thus an average factory worker consumes less than he requires for the maintenance of health and vigour. At places it has been found that the diet of a free labourer is worse than that of convicts. The diet that they take is deficient in quality as well as quantity owing to scarcity of ghee, milk and vegetables, the lack of fish and meat and preponderance of rice or millets. Rice is a staple food of large proportion of workers. Its protein is poor in quality and quantity. It lacks fats, vitamins and certain essential mineral elements. This causes a deficiency of stamina and lowers the power of resisting disease. Low standard of living saps physical energy, which in turn destroys mental vigour, ambition, initiative and desire for progress. This makes them victims of several diseases the most prominent of which are malaria, hookworm, dysentery, *kala-azar*, small-pox, influenza, and cholera. Major Norman White, the Sanitary Commissioner with the Government of India, in 1917 said that, “the weaker physique and lower vitality of the Indian worker which have caused him to be labeled ‘inefficient’ are due to removable pathological causes such as malaria and hookworm infection.” Dr. Buchanan, writing in 1934, remarked, “India is only at the dawn of the age of hygiene and is great breeding ground for some of the mankind’s most virulent disease enemies.”² Besides malaria, there are diseases due to diet deficiencies, rickets claiming 2·3 million cases and night blindness claiming 3·6 million, victims cases of T.B, are estimated at 5 million. This shows that there is close relation between diet and efficiency which fact was clearly borne out by the detailed enquiries of the League of Nations on Nutrition Problems, which observes that a number of diseases whose causes are hitherto unknown or merely suspected were due to dietetic errors. Rickets with its bony deformities, one of the scourges of Western civilization and beri-beri a scourge of rice-eating communities of the East were shown to be dietetic in origin and easily preventible. The resistance to many of serious infections of infancy and childhood including tuberculosis was found to be affected by diet. This partly gives the reason for the high infantile mortality in the working class districts in this country. Due to these preventible diseases the number of days which are lost every year must run into millions.

¹ *Material and Moral Progress in India*, 1927-28, p. 97.

² Buchanan, *Development of Capitalistic Enterprise in India*, 1934, p. 334.

Next to food, clothing is a primary necessity of man. The percentage of expenditure on clothing was found to be between 3 to 14 % at different places. With this expenditure they cannot renew their clothings at regular intervals and many of them find it very difficult to purchase the minimum of clothing even when it is absolutely needed. Our consumption of cloth per head was about 16 yards, while according to certain estimates a minimum of 30 yards is essential.

3. Migratory Character of the Labour Force

It is often alleged that they do not take interest in industrial life. The nature of their stay is temporary and they are always haunted by the memories of village life and are always too eager to go back to their village at the earliest possible opportunity. They return to their healthy village homes during the busy agricultural seasons or for marriages or on account of their own illness or owing to the illness or death of a relative. The Labour Commission (1931) pointed out that, "in most cases the workers have been born in the villages but many of them leave their wives in the country, that generally their childhood is spent in the villages. After industrial employment has commenced the worker returns to the villages as often as he can, sometimes because he may assist in agricultural operations in the busy seasons, sometimes because strain of work in the city needs to be relieved by a holiday in the country."

Explaining the cause of villagers' anxiety to return to the village, Sir Frank Noyce remarks: "The worker will often find himself amongst strangers whose language, culture, and customs are all alien to him. His health will often suffer from changes of climate and diet. His sanitary habits may be fraught with peril in his new surroundings, yet cannot easily be altered. There are also other dangers from sickness and disease and from the new and insidious temptation of city life. His working hours are transformed; continuous labour under rigid discipline takes the place of spasmodic work with long hours of leisure. Lastly, the constant turnover of labour force which, for these causes and other peculiar to Indian labour, occurs in most industries prevents the establishment of personal and friendly relations with his employer. The driving force in industrial migration comes from the village end of the channel. The city as such has no attraction for the villagers and few of them would remain in industry if they would secure sufficient food and clothing in the village. They are pushed not pulled to the city"¹.

Some of the facts stated above are true but they are not the causes. An Indian villager is no exception to the general human

¹ *Social Service in India*, pp. 285-286, (His Majesty's Stationery Office, London.)

rule of love for his native land but such love has been vastly exaggerated. The reason for his unrest and longing for the villages is that he finds himself in a strange and filthy environment with all the miseries and discomforts of industrial life without any of its amenities. Hence, the remedy for checking this sort of migration the Rege Committee suggested "the improvement of conditions in industrial towns, as regards work in factories, housing, wages and nutrition and to provide measures of social security for the workers¹," and it was of the opinion that there is no harm if they go to their villages for relaxation and rest for short periods. This could be done by providing a certain number of holidays with pay every year. The Government of India have necessarily introduced a system of holidays with pay for the benefit of the workers.

4. Bad Working Conditions in Factories ✓

Not only are the sanitary conditions of living in most industrial quarters filthy and positively dangerous but even in a number of factories the conditions conducive to work and health are lacking. In a hot country like India the factories have been built on the models of the British factories. Many of them do not possess enough of light and ventilation. Unlike other countries no adequate facilities are provided in the shape of medical aid, pure water, sanitary and latrine arrangements, dining sheds and facilities for bathing so very necessary in a tropical country like India. All these are elementary facilities which should very favourably react on the efficiency of labour; and yet these are badly neglected by our capitalists in their greed for profits. These react seriously on the efficiency of the industrial workers. The International Labour Office Report on 'Industrial Labour in India' observes that sanitary conditions are particularly unsatisfactory in non-regulated factories. There is, for instance, a marked absence of adequate sanitary arrangements. In such industries as the manufacture of shellac which is carried on in unsatisfactory buildings with leaking roofs, earth floors and poor lighting and ventilation, there is an almost universal absence of washing and sanitary arrangements. There is similar lack of sanitary arrangements and drainage in tanneries where there are pools refuse². Even after a decade the Rege Committee noticed no improvement. It remarked, "The up-keep of latrines is most unsatisfactory. They are neither white-washed nor tarred in several industrial concerns."³

5. Longer Hours of Work ✓

There is an intimate connection between the hours of work and the efficiency of the worker. The hours of work are so long that

¹ *Report of the Labour Investigation Committee, 1946, p 78.*

² *I L. O. Report on Industrial Labour in India, p. 189*

³ *Rege Committee Report, p 155*

that enter into the earning of the operatives. But they are mostly paid according to cost of living index number. Therefore, they have no visible link with the efficiency of the worker. Shorn of them, the basic wages as such can hardly be considered as adequate.

As the average families number 4 persons when $1\frac{1}{2}$ to 2 are wage earners, these average incomes are reduced to $\frac{1}{2}$ or $\frac{1}{3}$ when from these incomes we make allowance for indebtedness and likewise, for commissions the workers have to pay to the jobbers from month to month, the picture that suggests itself is the picture of the labouring population struggling on the margin of subsistence, if not below it, in industrial areas. This clearly shows that the earnings are hardly enough to make both ends meet especially when we take into account the large deductions, that should be made for the payment of debts. Improvement in efficiency can follow the improvement in the labour-employer relationship and no factor will prove more effective in achieving it than the guarantee of a living wages to the workers. It has been realised that a gradual increase in the level of wages has been followed by an increase in efficiency as has been proved in the case of Ahmedabad.

7. Indebtedness

The Labour Commission has estimated that at least $\frac{2}{3}$ of the industrial workers are in debt; and that in most cases the debt is larger than 3 months' wages. The rate of interest usually charged in one anna per rupee per month, i.e., 75% per annum. At this rate, interest on the debt amounting to 8 months' wages comes to 20% of the monthly wages. Frequently still higher rates of interest, reaching a maximum of 150% are charged. Some moneylenders obtain a higher rate than even 150% by taking promissory notes for larger amounts than the loans really given. The Report of the Special Officer on 'the Standard of Living of Jute mill workers' stated that the maximum interest charged was 325% or one anna per rupee per week. The Bombay Labour Office in their study of family budgets pointed out that no less than 47% of the families were in debt. The Rege Committee summing up the analysis of indebtedness observes: "In some cases indebtedness may no doubt be due to extravagance, vice and improvidence; and it would appear that the root cause of the evil is the want of any margin left for meeting expenditure of an unforeseen character. It is true that one of the main causes of indebtedness is the expenditure incurred on marriage, funeral, etc..... The worker is a part of social organisation, and has per force to conform to certain customary social standards even when he is not in a position to do so"¹. Thus the burden of debt heavily falls on the worker. The situation becomes more horrible, as it is unproductive debt, to recover from which is well-nigh impossible and the result is that the poor worker

¹ Rege Committee Report, p. 288.

is always groaning under heavy debt and remains under the thumb of the moneylender till the whole of the amount is wiped off. This mars the working efficiency of the worker to a marked degree.

8. Ignorance and Illiteracy

Majority of the working population is quite ignorant and illiterate. Only a small proportion of the workers are able to read and write in any language. Illiteracy prevents them from obtaining that knowledge of things in general and technical processes in particular which is the basis of efficiency. They have no opportunities, either at home or in institutions of obtaining training in qualities such as application and steadiness which are essential for industrial efficiency.¹ Hence, here every scheme of the betterment of the workers is retarded owing to the fact that the masses are absolutely illiterate. "A child born in dark, dingy house, brought up by an illiterate mother and growing up without any beneficial external influences can never become a satisfactory worker and a respectable citizen."² Harold Butler has rightly remarked, "As a cause of backwardness in comparison with Western nations, illiteracy in the East is far more potent than climate, especially when adequate health services have been established to deal with diseases."³

9. Social Environment

We must certainly take account of the social environment in considering the causes of inefficiency. The caste system has often hindered free mobility of labour. Most of the important industries have drawn the lower classes, generally devoid of education. The *Zenana* which is a Mohammedan custom has influenced the Hindus, and has interfered with the freedom of action of women, and deprived them of educational opportunities. To that extent, it prevents India from fully utilising the physical and mental resources of a third, if not half, of the industrial population.⁴

10. Absence of Scientific Management

The efficiency of management on which labour efficiency depends to a considerable extent is low in many establishments. There is a conspicuous absence of scientific management in India which could help to increase the efficiency of workers. Rationalisation of management means the application of the most up-to-date methods and technique and organisation with a view to minimise waste in effort and material. The whole survey shows clearly that Indian labour is more inefficient than the labour of other countries.

¹ Rajnikant Das, *Factory Labour in India*

² A. Marshall, *Principles of Economics*, : p 550.

³ *Problems of Industry in the East*, p. 26.

⁴ Wadia and Merchant, *Our Economic Problem*, pp. 553-554.

Sir H. P. Mody stated in his evidence before the Labour Commission, "In Japan a weaver minds four looms and efficiency there is 95%. In China a weaver minds four looms and efficiency there is 80%. In Bombay a weaver minds two looms and efficiency is 80%. Calculated on the basis of Japan and China a weaver in Bombay is paid 200. and 300% more than a weaver in Japan and China." Dr. Gilbert Slater observes that the different output is due rather "to the cheapness of the Indian worker as compared with the British worker than to any inefficiency in Indian worker."

A large number of employers are inefficient and consequently those who work under them are worse than masters. According to Marshall: "He is the best business man who continues to pay highest wages,"¹ and only those employers can afford to pay the highest wages who have the ability to get the maximum output of the workers.

To sum up we can say, that the efficiency of labour does not depend only on the labourer himself but it also depends on the nature of raw materials, the type and condition of machinery with which he has to work, and the working conditions under which he has to work, and the industrial organization in general. This means that in making comparisons between the efficiency of our labour and British and American labour we should take differences in machinery, conditions of work and living, etc., in the different countries into account. If all these factors are taken into consideration we are forced to remark that Indian labour is less efficient than the labourers in U. S. A. and U. K. or Japan. But we must remember, as Buchanan points out that, "Indian labour has had much to contend against in a trying climate, inefficient management, poor materials and a low standard of living, aggravated by an over-supply of labour and intense competition."²

As the Rege Commission remarks, "To sum up, considering that in this country hours of work are longer, rest pauses fewer, facilities for apprenticeship and training rarer, standard of nutrition and welfare amenities far poorer and the level of wages much lower than in other countries, the so-called inefficiency cannot be attributed to any lack of native intelligence or aptitude on the part of workers but to the environmental conditions."³

Remedies

In order to make the worker an efficient labourer it is absolutely essential that his environments must be changed and also constant efforts should be made to change his outlook on life. Concerted efforts will have to be made by the Government, mill-workers and labour leaders to improve it. We offer following suggestions to improve the efficiency of our labourers:—

¹ A. Marshall, *Principles of Economics*, p. 550.

² Buchanan, *Op. Cit.*, p. 386.

³ Report p 383, *Italics ours.*

(1) As a matter of fact with the exception of a few towns there does not exist in India any permanent class of workers and the biggest problem of Indian industries is the unstable working population. This is the root cause of inefficiency of Indian workers, because they cannot put their hearts into their work which they regard temporary calamity and all efforts that are made for workers' welfare by the employers are wasted on this unstable population. The problem before the country is, therefore, to produce permanent class of workers. This could be achieved in two ways : *Firstly*, by improving the conditions of life in towns and by pulling the workers instead of pushing them. *Secondly*, the younger generation and the children of the workers must be carefully trained and from the very beginning they should be provided with an industrial bias and a taste for town life.

(2) In the towns the industries should be confined to the suburbs and efforts should be made as far as possible to provide the village type of houses in the suburb to workers. They should be provided with richer and fuller amenities and amusements not only of village life but also of a better type. Further special efforts should be made to provide them with unadulterated food, water and milk and other necessities of life.

(3) Their children should be given free and compulsory education and those who show some special talents must be provided with technical education by giving them scholarships and other aids.

(4) There are two very important factors which can create a better and more stable industrial class and these are : *firstly*, provision against unemployment, technically called 'Unemployment Insurance,' and *secondly*, insurance for 'health'. To improve the character and to increase the efficiency of a large class of workers is a long and expensive process and no other ordinary employer has a means to make such a sacrifice the results of which can be achieved only in the long run. Thus there is a clear field for State to operate.

(5) The payment of the dearness allowance, bonus, etc., should be linked with production. A certain minimum wage may be fixed for labour subject to the condition that a labourer does a specified amount of work within a specified period.

(6) At present the labourers have adopted 'go slow' tactics which means that in the allotted time the labourer, instead of working with the required speed, wastes his time by working more slowly than he should. This tactics should be made to constitute a trade dispute. If the workers adopt 'go slow' tactics it should be open to the employer to get himself redressed through the Conciliation Machinery.

(7) The employer should be empowered to dismiss the labourer if he is not working efficiently and is not producing the required amount of output.

INDUSTRIAL HOUSING

Introduction

The subject of Industrial Housing has an imperative human appeal : it vitally concerns not only our economic but also our social future. Industrialism is advancing rapidly in the country. Its progress is apt to be measured in terms of wages and profits, but the vast human material which it so ruthlessly affects scarcely commands attention. Deep in the background of these slums, the flames are spreading we need no labour leaders or Bolshevik teaching from outside to fan these flames into a rebellious conflagration. The need for providing decent homes to the workers and their families is most urgent otherwise the conflagration may spread and where there are slowly rumbling forces underground there may be violent upheavals involving needless destruction.

The improvement of housing conditions in our industrial cities is thus a very pressing problem. It is now realised that the future of our industrial development is wound up with the question of improving the living and hygienic conditions in our industrial centres. The Government of India some years ago decided to construct a million houses for the workers over a period of ten years. Not much headway was made though various schemes have been under consideration from time to time. The subsidised Housing Scheme is, however, a great step forward. Industrialism is advancing rapidly in the country, its progress is measured by wages and profits, but the vast human scrap-heap, which it scatters wildly strikes few people. There are angry hisses and red sparks of revolt as is clear from strikes and lock-outs. Our problem thus is to save industrialism and adjust it somehow to an ancient people's nature, one way of adjustment consists in giving a decent home to the worker so that he need not seek unwholesome pleasure away from home nor do his children spend most of their time near drains and dustbins. Regionalisation of industries and their location in rural areas where plentiful land may be available is more than desirable.

It is gratifying to note that after our independence much emphasis has been laid on the question of housing for industrial workers. The statement of Industrial Policy that followed in April 1948 clearly laid down :

"The Government of India are also taking special steps to improve Industrial Housing as quickly as possible. A scheme for the construction of one million workers' houses in ten years is under consideration and Housing Board is being constituted for this purpose."

HOUSING CONDITIONS IN INDUSTRIAL CENTRES

In urban areas the housing conditions present the most shocking contrast as between the rich and the poor. In the following paragraphs the housing conditions of industrial workers in some important industrial centres are described.

Chawls of Bombay

In Bombay the majority of the workers live in 'chawls' (blocks of flats erected for the accommodation of large number of families). "Many of these chawls have tall narrow frontages and extreme depth, with the consequence that the rooms, especially those in the middle and on the ground floors, are denied both sunshine and air, lavatory arrangements are frequently inadequate and crude, and the air is filled with an undescrivable stench. As though this were not sufficient to poison the atmosphere, there is the common practice of throwing all the household rubbish and filth into the gullis. Much of this stagnates, and with the liquid sinking into the soil when the drains are in a bad condition, the net result is better imagined than described. It is to such a life that the worker and his family (if he has one) are condemned. To minimise discomfort the windows of the room opening on the gullis—the only outlets to the open—are kept practically always shut. Where the lavatories are not detached from the main building of course nothing can keep on the stench"¹

Often in one room of these chawls measuring 15 ft. × 12 ft., five to six families are found living, preparing their food separately. During night, clothes or sacking are flung on bamboos hung from the ceiling to partition room for different families. And as the Royal Commission on Labour remarked, "In the majority of cases these chawls are impossible of improvement and therefore fit only for demolition."² An enquiry conducted by the Bombay Labour Officer in 1938 revealed that of the families covered, 91.24 per cent, live in one room tenements and that the average number of persons residing in each such tenement is 3.84. The approximate floor space available per person and tenement is 26.88 and 103.23 sq. ft. respectively. The average monthly rent is Rs. 6-14-4 for one room tenements, the figure varying between Rs. 5 and Rs. 9 for 79 per cent of the total number of families. One room tenements constitute 81 per cent of the total tenements in the city, 74 per cent of the population of which dwells in these tenements.³

A considerable majority of workers, therefore, live in chawls privately owned. Most of these chawls are built of cheap materials and almost 60 per cent of them have plinth below 1 ft. According

1 B. Shiva Rao, *Industrial Worker in India* (1939), p. 105.

2 *Report of the Royal Commission on Labour* (1931), p. 273.

3 *Bombay Textile Labour Enquiry Committee Final Report*, Vol II (1940), p. 273.

to the Bombay Labour Office Enquiry conducted in 1938, the average number of persons per tenement was 4.05. Sometimes more than 10 persons live in one room measuring 12 ft \times 10 ft. Very often more than one family lives in one room. The floor is mostly kachcha and the roofing is either of corrugated iron sheet or of country tiles. Generally there is no lighting arrangement. A few chawls have common taps and some have tube-wells. Bath-rooms are not provided at all. A large number of chawls have not provided for latrines also and even where they are, they are in a most insanitary condition. Everywhere rubbish, dirt, stinking water are found, keeping the whole area unhealthy and insanitary.

Bustees of Calcutta

While in Calcutta one can admire the luxurious buildings around Calcutta, one will be horrified to look at slums known as bustees where a considerable majority of the workers live. These bustees are constructed by private landlords often mill sirdars. Every available foot of land has been utilised for building huts, dark, damp and leaky. The degree of overcrowding and congestion that can be seen in bustees around Calcutta is probably unequalled in any other industrial centre of the country. The huts are mostly kachcha with roofs of thatch, corrugated iron sheets or tiles. The height of these huts is also not more than 8 feet. A large number of huts have plinths below the ground level. The size of the room does not exceed 80 sq feet and still several families up to 12 persons will be found living in one room. The same room serves the purpose of kitchen and store-room. Most of these huts have no window and even if there is any, it is kept closed to secure privacy. The Administration Report of 1869 of the Corporation of Calcutta described these bustees as follows. "A bustee or native village generally consists of a mass of huts constructed without any plan or arrangement, without roads, without drains, ill-ventilated and never cleaned. Most of these villages are the abodes of misery, vice and filth and the nurseries of sickness and disease. In these bustees are found green and slimy stagnant ponds, full of putrid vegetable and animal matter in a state of decomposition and whose bubbling surfaces exhale, under a tropical sun, noxious gases, poisoning the atmosphere and spreading around disease and death. These ponds supply the natives with water for domestic purposes, and are very often the receptacles of filth. The articles which feed these tanks are the drains that ramify over the village and carry the sewage of the huts into them. Their position is marked by a development of rank vegetation. The entrances to these bustees are many, but are not easily discoverable, whilst the paths are so narrow and tortuous that it is difficult for a stranger to find his way through them. The huts are huddled together in masses, and pushed to the very edge of the ponds, the projecting eaves often meeting one another whilst the intervening spaces, impervious to the rays of the sun.

are converted into urinals and used by both sexes in common. In these huts often live entire families, the members of which occupy the single apartment of which it is not infrequently composed, and in which they feed and sleep together, the wet and spongy floor with a mat spread on it serving as a bed for the whole family." Though the condition was described three-quarters of a century ago still it is deplorable, no change has taken place in the condition of these bustees.

The quarters built by employers are also mostly unsatisfactory. The houses are built back to back, usually brick walls and have either brick-paved or kachcha floor. The roofs are either of beaten soorki or asbestos corrugated sheets. Generally these rooms have no windows and are damp, dark and dirty. Such houses are also quite inadequate in number. Recently, however, some employers have constructed quite good houses for their employees. The Birla Jute Mills have a colony providing housing for 43 per cent of the employees. The Hukum Chand Jute Mills have also recently constructed some good flats for their employees. The Bata Works at Batanagar have provided housing for some 4,000 of their employees. There are quarters for bachelors as well as for families. Most of the houses are electric lighted and have decent sanitary arrangement. There is also adequate arrangement for water supply.

Ahats of Kanpur

The cheries of Madras, the ahats of Kanpur, the bustees of Calcutta and the chawls of Bombay and Ahmedabad outslum the slums of many other countries of the world. The Kanpur Labour Inquiry Committee in their report point out : "Most of the workers have to live in slums locally known as ahats, where small, dingy rooms are let out on exorbitant rents. Most of these ahats are extremely insanitary and over-crowded and lack adequate sunshine and ventilation, to say nothing of water, light and conservancy. Quite a number of huts are below the street level. The conditions under which men, women and children in their thousands, about 40,000 souls—live in these ahats are indescribable. The space within each tenement where the worker lives with family, often numbering eight to ten persons, is smaller than the space we usually have in our bathrooms. An animal, especially if it be a horse or a cow, is given more room than the poor tenant. A night visit to these areas is for a stranger a positively risky undertaking—a sprained ankle is almost a certainty, while a broken neck by stumbling into a blind well, or a goodly sized hole, would not be an impossibility. Even the elementary service of public lighting is denied to these people. As for drainage and water supply, such luxuries are thought to be superfluities. The underground rooms, in which thousands of Kanpur workmen live reminded one of the members of the committee of the 'dug outs' of France during war time. While the slum dwellers should be some-

what protected from shot and shell in the event of an aerial bombardment, they are but easy victims to those ever active enemies of mankind, namely, the germ and the bug. These have wrought especially amongst the ranks of infants, the young and the women. The rate of infant mortality in Kanpur is still appallingly high. The paradox of the situation is that the ahata-owner, who has done the least for his tenants, stands to gain the most at the time of acquisition of land either by the Municipality or the Improvement Trust. The entire situation is iniquitous. It should not be permitted to continue a day longer than possible. Little wonder that the so-called agitator in Kanpur has such widespread and whole-hearted response from the labouring classes. The wonder is that they have kept silent for so long."¹

In 1938-39 an official inquiry was conducted which covered in all 1,421 families living in ahatas. It was found that 64·6 per cent lived in one-room tenements, 31·3 per cent in two rooms, 3 per cent in three rooms and only one per cent in more than three. The average size of these rooms was 11·4' × 8·5' × 10·2 and the area on an average was 96·9 square feet, with a capacity of 988·4 cubic feet. Sanitary conditions were conspicuously absent. All these facts throw a flood of light on housing conditions in Kanpur.

Cheries of South India

Worse than the bustees in their planless confusion, squalor and insanitation are the cheries of such South Indian towns as Madrás, Madura, Coimbatore, Tuticorin and Cochin. Where the Panchamas dwell filth and dirt are even more marked. Each single hut, as in Bengal, is made of mud and wattle or of old kerosene tin plates and the entrance to it is an aperture rather than a door. The average size of the hut is here reduced to 8' × 6'—and the material is flimsier than in Northern India, yielding more easily to rain and storm which are frequent. Inside each hut, complete darkness reigns even in day time, while there is overcrowding of the worst kind. Mahatma Gandhi's description of the cheries of Madura may be given here: one cherie I visited is surrounded by water and drains on all sides. In the rainy season, it must be a place unfit for human habitation. Another thing is, it is below the road-level and all these places are flooded during rains. The cottages in all the three cheries are built anyhow. There is no layout of the streets or lanes, and cottages in many places have no vents worth the name. In all cases without exception they are so low that you cannot enter in and get out without bending double. And in all cases, the upkeep of the place is certainly not even to the minimum sanitary standard.

In the city of Madrás there are about 200 such cheries of which more than half are owned by private individuals, 26 by

¹ *Kanpur Labour Enquiry Committee Report (1938)*, p. 78

the Government, 25 by the Corporation and 27 by trusts. In these are quartered about one-third of the population of Madras. A survey has revealed that 35 cheries, where about 15,000 persons live, are not provided with municipal water-supply, 134 cheries occupied by 183,000 persons have only 460 water taps. Only 12 cheries have an adequate supply of taps. In respect of latrine accommodation, 72 cheries have none at all while 109 have 121 latrines with about 1,200 seats.

Dhowrahs of Mining Areas—(coalfields)

Dhowrahs or miners' quarters are built usually by colliery proprietors from the points of view of the minimum permanent labour force required by them.

In the colliery dhowrahs 85 per cent of the miners' families are living in 1 room houses and 10 per cent in 2 room, 3 per cent in 3 room and only 2 per cent in 4 room houses

A dhowrah is often occupied by 12 to 15 persons. New relations are brought in and especially in winter some of the worst forms of overcrowding are met with, miners and loaders of the same village, caste, or gang prefer to live together in the rooms of one dhowrah; while those who work on different shifts often deliberately choose to occupy one set of rooms alternately.

Only at some of the bigger collieries are some latrines provided for the dhowrahs, but these are grossly inadequate in number. Miners especially the children, ease themselves too near the quarters and pigs do the work of scavengers.

In the dhowrahs for which piped water supply is provided the taps are too few and distant. It was found that in four collieries, there was only one tap provided for 75 to 80 dhowrahs.

Bustees and Barracks of the Plantations

In the plantation the usual housing accommodation adopted is of the bustee type, long lines of barracks with iron roofs and brick walls or bamboo huts with thatched roofs are built usually along the banks of streams or small channels and the usual defects of congestion, back of light and ventilation, and insanitation are met with. There are also hamlets consisting of small groups of separate huts scattered among the cultivations on high and low ground the coolies building their huts on receipt of advances from the gardens.

The lanes are narrow and crooked and littered with garbage and washings, and with the excreta of cattle and goats which are frequently found here. There are no separate cowsheds, an adjoining room serving to shelter the animals.

The huts are built at all angles in short or long blocks as space permits and also back to back. The danger of fire outbreaks

is serious in summer ; while during the rains the pathways to the bustees become small channels and there being no plinths water flows into the huts, when their inhabitants are compelled to go without cooking and perch themselves on earthenware vessels, their only belongings.

In the Darjeeling tea estates and in the plantations occupying hill sides, as in Coorg and Travancore, the lines of labourers' huts are similarly located on sites lying on the banks of streams, and dangers of water-logging or inundation are equally recurrent. Bathing and washing arrangements are seldom met with in the plantation bustees, although piped water supply is found in a number of gardens. There is hardly any latrine accommodation in a plantation. The labourers use the field and the jungle for nature's calls.

The sudden outbreaks of cholera in an epidemic form and the prevalence of hookworm disease testify to the dangers of lack of provision of latrines, and sanitary, bathing and washing place for the labourers. Where the bustees and their surrounding areas are not adequately drained, malaria and pneumonia become endemic causing a heavy mortality especially among women and children.

The National Sample Survey (October 1953 March 1954) investigated housing condition in 53 sample towns and in the four cities of Calcutta, Bombay, Delhi and Madras. It found that nearly one-fourth of the houses had plinths, walls and roofs of mud. The new construction has not kept pace with the growth of urban population. As against increase in urban population at a rate varying from 3 to 4 per cent annum, new houses have been built at a rate varying from 2 to 2.5 per cent. About 44 of the houses in urban areas have only one room; 28 per cent two rooms; 12 percent three room, and 16 per cent four or more rooms. About 46 per cent of the houses had less than 10 sq. feet per head. These facts illustrate the congestion which exist in urban areas.

Effects of Urbanization

The growth of urbanization and the imposition of a competitive system on a self-subsistent type of production have disturbed the economic isolation of the villages, and created a capitalist system involving a seasonal labour market and the exploitation of the masses. Whilst we have not enjoyed so far the benefits of industrialism to any great extent, we have produced in our cities all the evils associated with overcrowding, slums and unemployment. In cities housing and working conditions, recreation facilities and sanitary conveniences have all been incredibly bad, and food has been scarce and unwholesome ! An analysis of census returns throws some light on this problem, though, it does not reveal the whole picture. The outstanding facts are :

1. M. Read, *The Indian Peasant Uprooted*, 1931.

(1) Some of the cities have greater densities than is known even in the heavy industrial countries of the world, *e. g.*, in 1931 Bombay had 48,400 persons per sq. mile, and Calcutta 24,403, Madras 22,300, Jaipur 48,100, and Amritsar 24,900 persons per sq. mile as against only 24,900 persons per sq. mile in New York, 16,400 in Chicago, and 15,100 in Philadelphia in 1940.

(2) These densities are achieved despite an absence of tall buildings, for the bulk of population live in houses of one or two stories. Most of the tenements contain only one room with one or more families living huddled together in this space despite the fact that the size of these tenements is normally between 19×10 and 12×15 feet.¹ If an average of $2\frac{1}{2}$ persons per room be taken as an indication of overcrowding, then houses sheltering 96 per cent of the population of Bombay will be considered to be overcrowded and this population is housed so inadequately that the streets have to be used to supplement the sleeping accommodation. In fact, overcrowding is so great in Bombay that men have to sleep out wherever possible, and during the monsoon, when it is impossible to lie on the pavement, varandahs, alley-ways and stairs are all crowded with persons sleeping there.² Certain sections of Bombay show the worst form of overcrowding. Byculla with 99 per cent of the families living in single-room tenements, Sewri with 89 per cent, Mazagaon and Parel with 88 per cent and Second Nagbada with 87 per cent are the worst examples. The extent to which the slums have been created in India by the process of urbanization may be illustrated by the 1931 figures of congestion in Bombay city, Kanpur and Lucknow :

Cities	1 Room Tenement	2 Room Tenements	3 Room Tenements	4 Room Tenements	5 Room & over
Bombay	81	11	3	2	3
Kanpur	62.5	24.8	7.5	2.9	2.3
Lucknow	50.4	28.9	10.7	5.2	4.8

The census publishes figures of an average number of persons per house. The figures of one census are not strictly comparable to those of another, because of changing definitions.³

1 *Census of India*, 1931 Vol. 1, Pt. 1, p. 57.

2 *Census of India*, 1931, Vol. 1, Pt. 1, p. 57.

3 *Census of 1921* says, "Formerly a house was defined as the residence of one or more family having a separate independent entrance from the common way. But now it has been defined as the home of commensal family with its resident dependants and servants" (p. 46). This definition, though used in 1931, could not be applied universally in all parts of India, because of variation in family customs and reference to food and residence.

The 1951 Census attempted to follow a single system throughout the country. It defined a 'house' and a 'household' separately: 'A household' is a group of people who live together and take their food from a common kitchen. Whereas a 'house' is a building within which people live: provided that if different parts of the building is structurally separated and provided with separate main entrances so as to give independent access to each part (Vol. 1 Pt. I, p. 48).

The average number of persons per house was 5·8 in 1881. It was 5·4 in 1891, 5·2 in 1901 and 4·9 in 1911. The figures have been more or less constant up to 1921 after which there appears to have been an increase in the number of persons per house. The figures were 4·9 in 1921, 5·0 in 1931; 5·1 in 1941 and 5·8 in 1951. This shows that the number of houses is not increasing as fast as the number of people. The condition of housing has become acute. It has worsened during the past few years due to increasing population influx of refugees from Pakistan and a slowing down of the construction of new houses because of high prices of land, steel and building materials.

The Planning Commission had made a rough estimate of housing shortage in industrial towns by collecting information from 37 towns with a total population of 1¼ million working in large-scale industries. It came to the conclusion that there is an immediate need of housing accommodation for 4½ lakh industrial workers. According to another estimate there is a shortage of 18½ lakh houses in urban areas in addition to 10 lakh houses for displaced persons from Pakistan. Whatever may be the actual extent of the shortage, there is no doubt that there is acute shortage of housing accommodation.

The houses are not only scarce but the housing conditions are appalling both in the cities and the rural areas. The single-room ramshackle *bustees*, *ahatās*, *chawls*, *cheries* and *dowhras* have all been built by private landlords and employers. In the busiest centres the houses are built close together, eave touching eave, and frequently back to back in order to use all the available space. Neglect of sanitation is often evident from heap of rotting garbage and pools of sewage, whilst the absence of latrines increases the general pollution of air and soil. Many of the houses are without plinths, windows and adequate ventilation. They usually consist of a single small room, the only opening being a doorway often too low to enter without stooping. In order to secure some privacy, old kerosene tins and gunny bags are used to form screens which further restrict the entrance of light and air. In dwellings such as these, human beings are born, grow up, sleep and eat, live and die¹. Though this was written over two decades ago, yet the general features of houses in every industrial centre remain the same. The same sort of overcrowding, congestion, lack of sanitation and ventilation, absence of latrines and water-taps, dark, damp, filthy tenements with little arrangement for privacy are to be met with even now. Cooking and sleeping in the same room are common. The whole thing is awfully disgusting and it is simply surprising how human beings live under such conditions. The same story about appalling housing conditions in Madras, Ahmedabad, Bihar and Kanpur has been repeated by the respective Committees.²

¹ Report of the Royal Commission on Labour, 1931, pp. 271-72.

² Census of India, Vol 14 (Madras, Pt 1, p. 69), Report of the Royal Commission on Labour, p. 277. The Bihar Labour Enquiry Committee Report (1940), p. 88, and The Kanpur Labour Enquiry Committee Report (1938), p. 78.

Even with a bare 17 per cent people living in towns, the congestion in some of them is terrible. Rickets in children, and anaemia, dyspepsia and lassitude in grown-up people are characteristic of such houses whose air is vitiated by overcrowding; inhalation of such air results in the lowering of the power of resistance against all maladies in general and phthisis, bronchitis, diphtheria, pneumonia, enteric fever, parasitic diseases, etc., in particular. These diseases are common in all labour *bustees*. Epidemics also take a heavier toll in cities than in the open countryside. As Mr. Yeats remarked, "This urbanization has all the drawbacks of lack of control and general squalor." Approaches to very big cities like Bombay, Madras or Calcutta are hideous. Thousands of homeless squatters are found camping in the outskirts. Brick-kilns are another hideous sight. Delhi with its "ribbon development" along with roads going out of the city is an eye-sore. Calcutta is "an octopus with more than eight tentacles." Amritsar presents an ugly, repulsive look.¹

The following table shows the density of occupation in dwellings of different sizes in a few towns. It will be noticed that the average number of occupants per room is the highest in one-room tenements.²

Density of Occupancy (No. of persons per room) in dwellings of different sizes

	1-room	2-room	3-room	All dwellings
<i>Madras</i>				
Sugar Mills	4.9	3.2	2.7	4.2
Tramways	5.0	2.2	...	4.6
Tanneries	5.9	3.2	3.0	4.8
<i>Bombay</i>				
Employers' Houses	4.5	3.2	...	4.4
Private Houses	5.8	2.7	...	5.2
Printing Press	4.8	4.3	...	4.7
<i>Kanpur</i>				
Employers' Houses	4.0	3.1	...	3.9
Private Houses	3.8	2.4	=	3.2

(3) The absence of adequate housing accommodation has brought in a serious disparity between the proportions of sexes. The costly city life, the absence of work for women and the restriction on child and female labour reduce the possibility of bringing the family to the city. This makes the city all the more unattractive to the worker as a place of residence and increase the worker's desire to get back to his village home as soon as possible.

1 Yeats. *Census of India*, 1941, Vol. I. Pt. I.

2 Summarised from *Rege Committee's Report*, Table 137, p. 313.

The sex disparity is most marked in the age groups 25-30 and 30-35. This is responsible for the spread of prostitution and of venereal diseases from the industrial centres to the villages. While the man-worker leading single life comes back to the village tainted and diseased, "the woman workers lose their self-respect and virtue and are looked down by the village population" In the thousands of slums of the Indian industrial centres, manhood is, unquestionably, brutalised, womanhood dishonoured, and childhood poisoned at its very source.¹ The following table gives sex ratio of the towns and cities.²

Sex Ratio in the Towns and Cities, 1881-1941

Cities under 5,000

<i>Class of towns</i>	1881	1891	1901	1911	1921	1931	1941
persons	110	110	111	111	113	118	N.a.
5,000 to 10,000	105	104	105	107	108	111	N.a.
10,000 to 20,000	105	106	106	108	110	113	N.a.
20,000 to 50,000	106	109	110	115	121	121	N.a.
50,000 to 100,000	111	114	111	118	120	120	N.a.
100,000 to 500,000	111	115	116	122	131	128	127
500,000 and over	162	178	156	171	175	173	161

Although India has been traditionally rural, there are undeniable evidences that a change is coming on. The acceleration in the growth of cities, the trend towards industrial and commercial expansion, the potential development of females in the urban industrial centres and the consequent normalisation of the sex ratio, all point to the fact that urbanization in India is likely to gain momentum as it goes forward, and that within the coming decades the pace may become extremely rapid.

But in India, we do not advocate piling up of people in big cities, blindly following the West. We are anxious not to repeat the mistakes of the West. We should have a scientifically planned development of our cities so that all evils associated with congested areas are prevented from appearing. Scientific town-planning would mean the equitable distribution of the available land according to the various needs of the community including the provision for residential and industrial areas, space for broad thoroughfares, dustless macadamised tar roads, and avenues, gardens, parks and pools and civic amenities like a protected water supply, hygienic sewage disposal and adequate lighting. For future we should have medium-sized, open, airy and healthy towns. What is needed is the urbanization of the rural and ruralisation of the urban centres.

1 R. K. Mukerjee, *The Indian Working Class*, (1951), p. 320.

2 From *Census of India*, 1891, 1901, 1931, 1941.

Housing Problem in Post-Independence Era

The post-Independence era has witnessed a serious effort to relieve the housing distress in country. Rs. 120 crores have been provided in the Second Plan (as against only 38.5 crores in the First Plan) for housing purposes. The programme consists of the housing of low-income groups and the industrial workers as well as the sanitation Labour and middle-income groups, besides slum-clearance and rural housing.

Subsidised Industrial Housing Scheme

Top priority had necessarily to be accorded to the requirements of industrial workers and the subsidised housing scheme came into operation in September 1952. Sanctions amounting to Rs. 23.63 crores have been issued till the end of November 1956 for the construction of 84,956 tenements. Out of this amount loans of Rs. 1,180 lakhs and subsidies of Rs. 1,037 lakhs have gone to State Government for the construction of 70,581 tenements; private employers got loan subsidies amounting to Rs. 94 lakhs and Rs. 89 lakhs respectively for 12,730 houses and Co-operative Societies of workers have been sanctioned loans amounting Rs. 23 lakhs and subsidies amounting to Rs. 12 lakhs for 1645 tenements. The construction of over 47,000 houses had been completed, the rest are in various stages of construction. Projects involving construction of another 13,476 tenements at an estimated cost of Rs. 3.68 crores are at present under consideration.

Apart from the progress in the working of the scheme, a number of modifications of far-reaching importance have been introduced in the scheme during the years 1954, 1955 and 1956. As a result of these improvements, given below, construction of more and better type of house may be expected under the scheme.

(i) Extension of the scope of scheme to mine workers (other than those employed in coal and mica mines for whom there are separate provisions administered by the Ministry of Labour) governed by the Mines Act, 1952.

(ii) Availability of aid for two-roomed tenements on the same general lines (on enhanced basis) as for one-roomed houses.

(iii) Liberalization in the mode of payment sanctioned assistance to the co-operative societies in such a manner that lack of initial capital does not stand in the way of their undertaking constructing work

(iv) Formulation of an arrangement whereby State Government can construct houses in the first instance and then sell them to workers on a hire-purchase system.

(v) Instead of enforcing separate ceilings for land development and building costs, excess or saving in one can now be

adjusted with the saving or excess in the other, subject to the overall ceilings not being exceeded.

(vi) Enhancement of ceiling cost for land development from Rs. 440 to Rs. 640 in respect of all towns having a population of over 3 lakhs (excluding, of course, Calcutta and Bombay for which increased ceilings, commensurate with the high costs prevalent there, already exist).

(vii) Provision of increased ceilings for land development and building costs in respect of single storeyed construction by co-operatives of industrial works in Calcutta and Bombay, i.e., instead of the normal ceilings of Rs. 440 for land development and Rs. 2,260 2,900 for construction in the case of one and two-roomed tenements, and is now admissible on the ceilings of Rs 800 for land development and Rs. 2,825 to Rs. 3,625 for construction purposes.

Low-income Group Housing Scheme

The Low Income Group Housing Schemes announced in November 1954 envisages grant of financial assistance through the State Governments on convenient and reasonable terms to those with low incomes, (i.e. not exceeding Rs. 6,000) and their co-operative societies who are desirous of building their houses. Assistance is payable in the form of loans, bearing an interest of 4½ per cent and repayable in 30 annual equated instalments. The quantum of loan is 80 per cent of the cost of building the house (including land) subject to a maximum of Rs. 8,000 can be disbursed, under the scheme.

The scheme also provides for the following :

(i) Grant of loans by the Centre to the State Government for the acquisition and development of sites. The rate of interest on such loans is about 3½ per annum. The loan is repayable within 3 years and, during this period, the plots of land, so acquired and developed are to be sold to persons in the low-income groups on a "no-profit-no-loss" basis.

(ii) Construction of houses by the State Governments themselves (or through their statutory bodies). All such houses have to be sold, either outright or on a hire-purchase basis, to individuals in the low-income groups or co-operatives of such individuals ; and

(iii) Grant of assistance to local bodies, co-operative tenant societies, non-Governmental but recognised health institutions and hospitals, educational trusts and other charitable institutions for construction of houses. The ownership of these houses vests with those bodies or institutions which may rent them out to their low-paid staff, but the rent, so charged, is not to contain any

element of profit. These houses may also be sold to the low-paid staff outright or on hire purchase basis. The maximum loan assistance in case of local bodies is limited to Rs. 2,800 per house, except in the case of the local bodies in Calcutta and Bombay in whose case the maximum is Rs. 3,600 per house. The tenant societies, etc., are, however, entitled to the higher maximum of Rs. 8,000 per house. Assistance is payable in suitable instalments related to the progress of construction.

A sum of Rs. 21.53 crores was allocated to different State Governments during the First Five Year Plan and, out of these allocations, a sum of Rs. 11.14 crores was actually distributed to them.

The following table shows the progress of tenement construction under the subsidised Housing Schemes:

PROGRESS OF CONSTRUCTION OF TENEMENTS UNDER THE SUBSIDISED HOUSING SCHEME

Agency	Loan sanctioned	Subsidy sanctioned	No of tenements	Progress of construction			Disbursement	
				No. of tenements completed	No of tenements under construction including those on which construction has not started	Loan	Subsidy	
State Government	6,63,72,209	6,35,13,259	43,062	23,208	19,854	5,56,41,629	2,85,37,435	
Employers	1,02,24,518	69,02,882	10,395	3,011	7,584	9,44,441	4,79,668	
Co-operatives	9,57,636	5,58,483	873	185	688	4,62,360	57,630	
Total	7,75,54,339	7,09,74,624	54,330	26,404	28,126	5,70,48,430	2,73,74,733	

Middle Income Group Housing Scheme

A separate scheme for the grant of house-buildings loan to the middle income groups is under the consideration of the Government of India. The amount of loan will be limited to 80 per cent of the cost of land and building subject to a maximum of Rs. 25,000.

Slum Clearance and Sweepers Housing

The question of slum clearance and sweepers housing had been engaging the attention of Government of India for quite sometime but it was not possible to do anything tangible on account of the fact that the low rent paying capacity of slum dwellers and sweepers called for heavy subsidies which could not be made available during the first plan period because of competing claims of other development schemes on the limited resources available.

It has now been decided, however, to make a beginning in these fields with a provision of Rs 20 crores in the Second Five Year Plan. A slum clearance and sweepers housing are essentially a local responsibility the pattern of financial assistance proposed in the scheme is :

(1) 25 per cent of the cost to be given by the Centre and subsidy, with an equal amount to be found by the State Government as a matching subsidy and (ii) the balance of 50 per cent of the cost to be advanced by the Centre as loan.

The two important principles on which the scheme is based are .

(i) There should be the minimum dislocation of slum dwellers and efforts should be made to re-house them, as far as possible, at the existing sites of the slums and/or sites nearby, in order to ensure that they are not uprooted from their field of employment ;

(ii) In order to keep down rents within the paying capacity of slum-dwellers, the emphasis should necessarily be laid more on provision of the minimum standards of environmental hygiene and essential services rather than on construction of any elaborate and costly structures.

No financial assistance under the scheme is envisaged for rehousing of slum-families whose income exceeds Rs. 250 per mensem in Bombay and Calcutta and Rs. 175 per mensem elsewhere. The slum-families with an income higher than these ceilings would be encouraged to avail of the loan assistance available under the Low-Income Group Housing Scheme, or other housing schemes of the Central or the State Governments.

It is realised that this modest provision which the Centre has been able to set apart for the purpose, is hardly adequate to deal efficiently with the problem, but it does not represent an advance on the current state of affairs and it is hoped that some of the worst slum at least in the larger town will have been cleared by the end of the next plan. Much will of course depend on the enthusiasm that the State Government may evince in the formulation of their slum clearance and sweepers housing programmes with the aid now proposed to be made available. It must however not be forgotten that the construction of tenements for industrial workers under the subsidised Industrial Housing Scheme also contributes in some measure to the clearance of slums, particularly in the Industrial towns.

Plantation Labour Housing Scheme

Even though the Plantation Labour Act 1957 makes it obligatory on every employer to provide and maintain for all workers and their families residing in plantations, necessary housing accommodation most of the planters, particularly the smaller ones could not fulfil their obligations mainly on account of inadequate financial resources. In response to their demand for central assistance a Plantation Labour Housing Scheme has now been drawn up for implementation during the Second Five Year Plan, and a provision of Rs. 2 crores has been made in the plan for the purpose. Assistance is proposed to be given to planters through State Governments in the shape of interest bearing Loans, to the extent of the cost of houses on much the same lines as contained in the Low Income Group Housing Scheme.

Under the Plan

Under the Second Plan a larger allotment is made for industrial and other housing schemes. As against a provision of Rs. 38.5 crores in the First Plan, the provision in the Second Plan is Rs. 120 crores allotted as follows:¹

		Crores of Rs
Subsidised Industrial Housing	...	45
Low Income Group Housing	...	40
Rural Housing	...	10
Slum Clearance and Sweepers Housing	...	20
Middle Income Group Housing	...	3
Plantation Housing.	...	2
		<hr/> 120 <hr/>

1. *Second Five Year Plan*, 1956, p. 555.

The schemes under the Second Plan are ambitious and cover many more items than the First Plan and the largest to be achieved are ¹.

	No. of Houses Tenements
Subsidised Industrial Housing	... 128,000
Low Income Group Housing	... 68,000
Rehousing of slum dwellers	... 110,000
Middle Income Group Housing	... 5,000
Plantation Labour Housing	... 11,000
	<hr/>
Total..	3,22,000

Programmes undertaken by other Central Ministries, by State Governments and local authorities and those pertaining to coal mines labour are expected to provide 753,000 units in addition to provide construction, which has been reckoned for the Second Plan period at 800,000 units. Thus the total programme for Second Plan envisages the construction of about 1.9 million units as compared with about 1.3 million during the First Plan

NATIONAL BUILDING ORGANISATION

One of the important problems facing the Government, so far as housing is concerned is the reduction of building costs which are admittedly very high at present. The National Building organisation set up by the Ministry of Works, Housing and Supply in July 1954, is intended to provide the means and machinery for achieving this end as far as possible. The essential functions of this organisation are to collect and disseminate useful information on building science, techniques and materials formulation and co-ordination of research problem on cheaper and better building materials and techniques, standardisation of building legislation, byelaws, techniques and material etc. Since the field of activity is vast and complicated progress is bound to be slow. Notwithstanding initial difficulties the organisation is at present engaged in a number of activities in fulfilment of its objection. The following are the noteworthy examples N.B.O Journal, which came into existence in December 1955, will be of considerable educative value to those who are interested in building trade and practice. Development of gypsum as building material the experimental manufacture of the gypsum boards (on cottage industry basis undertaken by N. B. O. and the investigations of a working group on Development of Gypsum). Experimental Manufacture of Hottow Bricks; and effort to standardise certain building material in collaboration with the I. S. I. etc.

1 *Op cit*, p 356.

Conclusion

Small employers are generally incapable of providing houses to their workers, moreover, the houses built by the employers are likely to be of high rent, whereas the need of the workers is of cheap but healthy houses. The responsibility of the State is therefore, twofold. *Firstly*, it should prepare a housing plan, lay down the type and size of the houses to be constructed and the rent to be charged. This plan should be executed by the employers and special housing boards which should be constituted in each industrial centre. *Secondly*, the State should help the employers and the housing boards in acquiring suitable lands near the mills for building houses, by enforcing the Land Acquisition Act, in their favour.

There are certain important problems connected with the housing. The first is that the rent of the workers quarters should be within their means. A living wage at least must be paid to the workers and the rent of the houses must be such that they may afford to pay it out of their wages. *Secondly*, such amenities of life as dispensaries, markets, schools and post offices must be available near the labour colonies. *Thirdly*, there is the question of cheap conveyance. The employers should provide the cheap bus services to bring to and fro the workers from their dwellings to the mills. *Fourthly*, some reasonable principles preferably according to the period of service put in should be adopted by the employers for making allotment the houses amongst their workers. *Lastly* for effecting a long term solution of this problem, the State should prohibit further starting of industrial concerns in areas which are already overcrowded and where the housing is already a serious problem.

To conclude, we might say improved housing is the first step towards an improvement of the standard of living, behaviour and morals of the industrial worker. With all this will come the conquest of preventable disease and mortality and improvement of health and output. The problem of housing is, undeniably, the most central for the efficiency and the well being of the Indian working class. To those who assert that India cannot afford to spend more money for industrial housing, there can be only one reply that she can no longer afford to delay such expenditure.¹

1. R. K. Mukerjee, *The Indian Working Class* (1951) p. 321

CHAPTER XII

LABOUR WELFARE

During recent years the question of industrial efficiency and labour welfare has been attracting increasing attention. Both administrators and industrialists are paying much attention towards this problem. This is as it should be ; for India is rapidly mobilising its industrial and mineral resources and it will not be long before it ranks as one of the leading countries of the world.

When Industrial Revolution set in, it was thought that it will bring in its train peace, progress and prosperity. It did bring prosperity but that prosperity was only for the privileged few. It made rich more rich and poor more poor. The men and women everywhere felt that this new power was inhuman, that it disregarded all their instruments and sensibilities, that it brought into their lives an inexorable force, destroying and scattering their customs, their tradition, their freedom, their ties of family and home, their dignity and character as men and women

It is very unfortunate that in the past this problem has not received the attention which its important nature deserved. As a consequence the industrialisation of the country has not proved an unmixed blessing. It is a great tragedy that on this account the science of economics has been blamed for its indifference to or even positive neglect of the labour welfare problems. Raskin styled it as "the bastard child of darkness." Carlyle condemned it in the strongest possible words.

At the close of the Industrial Revolution in the 19th century, the appalling misery of the workers, the unbelievably long hours of work, and the appalling poverty and distress of the workers were all neglected by a large number of economists of that period. As a matter of fact some went so far as to defend the system of the freedom of individual liberty and asserted that the workers were free to make contract and no one was responsible for their distress.

No economist of the day in estimating the gains and the losses of factory employment ever allowed for the strain and violence that a man suffered in his feeling when he passed from a life in which he could smoke or eat, dig or sleep as he pleased to one in which somebody turned the key on him, and for fourteen hours he had not even the right to whistle. It was like entering the airless and laughterless life of a prison.

"While the engine runs the people must work. Men women and children are yoked together with iron and steam. The animal machine breakable in the best case, subject to a thousand source of suffering is chained fast to iron machine, which knows no suffering and no weariness." These lines will speak how labour was treated in early days and even at present they are not free from worries. The problem of Industrial Labour and his welfare is very important in a country which is dreaming for industrialisation on fast scale.

Times without number we are told that Indian labour is inefficient; he is incapable of doing any hard work, he wastes his money in gambling and drinks, the output of his work is considerably less than that of labourers in other countries. Discipline is unknown to him and he is hard to manage. If these charges are correct then it seems almost impossible for this country to become an efficient industrial country to any considerable extent. If the Indian labourer is guilty of all these charges we must find out the motives which impelled him to commit all these offences. When we probe deep into the question we find very gloomy picture indeed.

Unsatisfactory Housing Conditions

The housing conditions are far from satisfactory. It is an undisputed fact that the density of labour population in industrial centres like Bombay, Calcutta, Madras, Kanpur and Ahmedabad is extremely high. The *cheris* of Madras, the *ahatas* of Kanpur, the *bustees* of Calcutta and the *chawls* of Bombay and Ahmedabad "outslum the slums of many other countries of the world". In the urban and industrial areas cramped sites, the high value of land and the necessity for worker to live in the vicinity of his work have all tended to intensify congestion and overcrowding. In the busiest centres the houses are built close together, eave touching eave and frequently back to back in order to make use of all available space. Neglect of sanitation often evidenced by heaps of rotting garbage and pools of sewage, whilst the absence of latrines enhances the general pollution of air and soil. Houses, many without plinths windows and adequate ventilation, usually consist of a single room, the only opening being a doorway, often too low to enter without stooping. In order to secure some privacy old kerosene tins and gunny bags are used to form screens which further restrict the entrance of light and air. In dwelling such as these human beings are born, sleep and eat, live and die.¹ These rooms may rightly be called "fox holes" or black holes. The stuffy atmosphere of the rooms coupled with dreary and congested surrounding and insufficient

1 Report of the Royal Commission on Labour, 1931. pp 271-272.

sanitary and other conveniences render them altogether unfit for human-habitation. In this respect Dr. Mookerji rightly remarks 'the operatives live (in Bengal coal mines) infelicitously and dingy huts, where manhood is brutalised, womanhood dishonoured and childhood poisoned at the very source'¹

The worker born, brought up and nourished in such atmosphere is hardly able to work efficiently because dirt and overcrowding bring about mental depression and impaired metabolism which in turn react upon health and lead to impaired efficiency, unemployment and poverty. All this leads not only to a physical waste of energy, general enervation but also to a low standard of living, health and low resisting power, which play directly into the hands of immorality and disease.

Intolerable Working Conditions

Not only are the housing conditions so appalling but the conditions of working inside the mills and factories (both in the regulated and unregulated) beggar description. In many of the mills the annual lime washing of the walls, ceilings and passages is not carried out, the cleaning of floor is neglected, rubbish and debris are allowed to collect, drainage carrying water and sewage are not properly constructed or connected with the main drains of the towns or flushed regularly, and the latrine accommodation is neither sufficient nor clean, the waste water being allowed to accumulate and to produce a nasty smell and the pans being worn out and not cleaned regularly. The workers naturally object to use filthy latrines, so that the surrounding of factory become insanitary. The supply of drinking water is not always satisfactory. There is often good deal of scrambling around the water supply.

Beside this fatigue is a normal feature with industrial workers who have to repeat the same process several times on the same machine. This creates a nuisance in the worker and he soon feels tired. According to Prof. Irving Fisher, "A typical succession of events is first fatigue then colds, then tuberculosis, then death."²

Lack of Sanitation and Health Facilities

Sickness among workers is due to many varied causes-occupational hazards, bad working conditions, a miserable home-life, inadequate housing comforts, undesirable community surroundings, unintelligent regulation of personal lives and others. In industries the worker inhales dust and fumes which affect his lungs and lower his power of resistance. Thus he falls an easy prey to the disease. A glance at the mortality statistics of the Indian

1. R. K. Mukerjee, *Indian Working Class*

2. T. N. Rastogi, *Indian Industrial Labour*, 1949, p. 20.

worker will reveal that about 70 per cent of the deaths are caused by cholera, small pox, plague, fevers, dysentery and diarrhoea and tuberculosis. Thus while the workers' health is constantly being menaced by various causes, no adequate medical facilities are provided to make up the damage done to their bodies and spirits. This is proved by an enquiry made by Bombay Labour Office in 1930-31. It shows that a very small percentage of the workers obtain adequate medical relief. About 22 per cent of the sick received no medical aid at all, while nearly 40 per cent resorted to country medicines and quacks because of prohibitive cost of proper medical care. Much is also due to ignorance, superstition, belief in the potency of charms and prejudices against western medicines and hospitals. Once a worker falls ill there is little chance of his getting completely cured in the environment and conditions in which he lives and works.

Dr. Turner has rightly observed that, "In cities in India a high mortality follows closely insanitary surroundings, absence of domestic and personal hygiene, want of ventilation and light and the presence of filth, in fact the incidence of disease is directly related to the insanitary domestic surroundings, the incidence varying with the habits and customs of the people with regard to their food, personal cleanliness, domestic habits, washing, bathing, cleaning of rooms, clothes and personal habits and living and sleeping"¹

Unwholesome Food-intake

Besides these problems, the problem of nutrition of the worker is also important. The opinion of the qualified observers is that the limited diet as well as the insufficient food consumption of workers have resulted in malnutrition and under-nourishment, and the huge incidence of sickness among them bears out this opinion. The diet of the average industrial worker falls far below the standards commonly considered necessary for good health and that among many groups of workers the dietary intake is at a dangerously low level. The total food supply available to him is totally inadequate, as also highly unbalanced. An enquiry made into over 2,000 families of Jute mill workers in Bengal showed that the food consumed by an average worker is equivalent to 2,700 calories after allowing for waste (when it ought to be 3,600 calories), but the kind of food that go to make up this total differ greatly with different workers. Only about 63 per cent get a "square meal", i.e. food consisting of two-third carbohydrates, one-sixth fats, one-eighth protein and mineral salt besides vitamins.

1. Turner and Goldsmith, *Sanitation in India*, p. 312.
2. I. L. A. Act 1931, *Memorandum for Labour*, p. 100.

Benefits of Labour Welfare Work

The labour welfare work is necessary not only for the worker's benefit, but it is also all the more necessary for the employer's own interest for the following reasons :—

(1) The welfare work has beneficial effects for the workers. The welfare measures influence the sentiment of the workers, and contribute to the maintenance of industrial peace. When the worker feels that the employer and the State are interested in his day-to-day life, he would like to take advantage of such facilities and make his lot happier and his tendency to grouse and grumble will steadily disappear.

(2) Better-housing, co-operative societies, canteens, sickness and maternity benefits, provident funds, gratuities and pensions, educational facilities, free or cheap rate cinema shows, etc., are bound to create a feeling amongst the workers and they have a stake in the industry and the working class become more stabilised and economically efficient, and strikes are avoided lest they are deprived of these additional benefits.

(3) Labour-turnover and absenteeism are stopped. Whatever improves conditions of work and life for the employees, whatever leads to increasing adaptation of the worker of his task and whatever makes him full contented will lessen his desire or need to leave it for a time and lighten for him and the industry the burden of absenteeism.¹

(4) Apart from humanitarian value, social advantages are considerable. The provision of canteens improve their physique, entertainments reduce the incidence of vices; medical aid and maternity and child-welfare improve the health of the workers and bring down the rates of general, maternal and infant mortality; and educational facilities increase their mental efficiency and economic productivity.²

Scope of Welfare Work

With the changed times it is very satisfactory to note that the conservative outlook has completely altered and increasing attention is being devoted to the study of labour problems. In order to improve the working conditions of mills and to promote his economic and social well being certain important measures and activities have been undertaken by the State, employers and associations of workers. Such schemes are broadly termed "welfare work." The Royal Commission also observed, it is a term which

1. *Bombay Textiles Labour Enquiry Committee*, 1940, p. 304.

2. *Labour Investigation Committee, Main Report*, p 342.

must necessarily be elastic, bearing a somewhat different interpretation in one country from another, according to the different social customs, the degree of industrialisation and the educational development of the worker.¹ This question of welfare is somewhat subjective and that the definition largely depends upon the circumstances of each case. Mr. Arthur James Todd aptly remarks, "A series of sharply diverge opinions exist on the motives and merits of industrial welfare work"

Miss E. T. Kelly (President of the Welfare Workers Institute of England) meant by welfare work, 'the adoption by a firm of a certain principle of conduct and action in its relations with its employees'² Sir Edward Panton, an employer defined the term as, "anything that makes the conditions in the factory conducive to happiness, health and prosperity of the workers" The United States Bureau of Labour Statistics defines welfare work as, "anything for comfort and improvement, intellectual and social, of the employers over and above wages paid, which is not a necessity of the industry."³ The Encyclopaedia of Social Sciences defines it as, "the voluntary efforts of the employers to establish, within the existing industrial system, working and sometimes living and cultural conditions of the employees beyond what is required by law, the custom of the industry and the conditions of the market."⁴ Again, E S Proud defines the welfare work as, "voluntary efforts on the part of the employers to improve the existing industrial system, the conditions of employment in their own factories. According to Mr. N. M. Joshi the welfare work covers all the efforts which employers make for the benefit of their employees over and above the minimum standard of working conditions fixed by Factory Act and over and above the provisions of the social legislations providing against accident, old ages, unemployment and sickness⁵

According to a recent Report of the I L O. worker's welfare should be understood as meaning such services, facilities and amenities which may be established in, or in the vicinity of, undertakings to enable the persons employed in them to perform their work in healthy, congenial surroundings and provided with amenities conducive to good health and high morale.⁶ A resolution adopted by the I. L. O. Conference (30th session, June 1947) enumerated some of these services and amenities. These include : adequate canteens, rest and recreation facilities, sanitary and medical facilities,

1. Report, op cit., p. 161.

2. E. T. Kelly, *Welfare Work in America*, Journal of Welfare Work Institute, July, 1920, p. 101.

3. Todd, Arthur James, "Industry and Society", *A Sociological Appraisal of Modern Industrialism*, p. 251

4. *Encyclopaedia of Social Sciences*, Vol XV, 1935, p. 393.

5. N. M. Joshi, *Trade Union Movement in India*, p. 26.

6. Report II of the I L O. Asian Regional Conference, p. 5.

arrangements for travel to and from work and the accommodation of workers who are employed at a distance from their homes

All these definitions reveal the points of conflicts in respect the term 'welfare work. We are still in doubt whether the work is confined only to the employers, whether it excludes the work inside the factory, whether it covers the minimum standard fixed by legislation and whether it relates to moral and intellectual improvement of the workers. Various suggestions have been given and in consequence welfare work has been subdivided in the light thereof. These divisions would be more clear if we study the different agencies of worker's welfare. Dr. P S Loknathan regards three agencies—The State, the employer and the organised labour. Dr. Broughton adds one more agency, viz., the public and the semi-public social welfare societies. It will, therefore, be incorrect to confine the welfare work to employers alone. There are a number of activities that are not touched by legal enactments—labour legislations and that relate mainly for welfare work outside the factory including such schemes as housing recreational, educational and physical facilities and co operative societies.

The Labour Investigation Committee, appointed by Government of India prefer to include under welfare activities anything done for the intellectual, physical and moral and economic betterment of the worker, whether by employers, by government, or by other agencies, over and above what is laid down by law or what is normally expected on part of the contractual benefits for which the workers may have bargained.¹ Thus it includes housing, medical and educational facilities, nutrition facilities for rest and recreation, co-operative societies, day nurseries and creches, provision of sanitary accommodation, holidays with pay, social insurance, maternity benefit schemes, and provident funds, gratuities and pensions, etc.

Aims of Labour Welfare Work

(1) It is partly humanistic, to enable the workers to enjoy a fuller and richer life.

(2) It is partly economic, to improve the efficiency of the worker, to increase its availability where it is scarce and to keep them contented so as to minimise the inducement to form or join unions and to resort to strikes.

(3) The aim is partly civic, to develop a sense of responsibility and dignity among the workers, and thus to make them worthy citizen of a nation.

1 *Labour Investigation Committee Report*, 1945, p 345.

But it is unfair to think that labour welfare is of exclusively a pseudo-philanthropic character, though its motivating forces touch the borders of humanitarianism. In fact it is the most important sociological problem. Employers, trade unionists, and government must join hands in the social and economic uplift of the vast army of workers on which depends largely the destiny of free India.

Welfare Work and Social Work

Welfare work has been distinguished from Social work. According to Miss Herring, "Welfare work has one very fundamental distinction from social work. The latter implies no relation between employer and employee, but rather suggest the activities of a State department or a volunteer organisation. Welfare work is always the work of an employer. Social work means to most people advice in solution of individual or family problems through any possible adjustment"¹ Thus according to her what the employer voluntarily does for the moral and material betterment of his employees is welfare work and what the State and other organisations do for the workers is social work. There are others like Miss J. H. Kelmen who use the term on quite a different ground. According to her the name carries with it the suggestions of efforts for definite groups of workers rather than that of social co-operation towards better relationships throughout the community.²

Welfare Work Inside and Outside the Factory

There was a time when Indian welfare workers confined their activities towards the welfare of the workers outside the factory. But now it includes all attempts to ameliorate the general conditions of life of the workers done outside and inside the factory.³ This division of welfare work into the work done inside the factory and that done outside the factory, has been distinguished by Dr. Broughton by the terms *intra-mural* and *extra-mural* welfare work.⁴ *Intra-mural* welfare work consists of welfare schemes within the factory such as medical aid, compensation, of accidents, creches and canteens, supply of drinking water and provident and pension funds. *Extra mural* welfare work deals with the conditions outside the factory such as housing, indoor and outdoor recreation facilities (cinema and magic lantern shows excursions, dramatic performances and indoor and outdoor games) adult and child education, provision of reading rooms and libraries, etc.

1. H. L. Herring *Welfare Work in Mill Villages*, pp. 9-10.

2. J. H. Kelmen, *Labour in India*.

3. V. Anstey, *Economic Development of India*, p. 315

4. G. M. Broughton, *Labour in Indian Industries*, pp. 181-2

A similar distinction can be made between 'welfare work relating to conditions of employment' and that 'confined to living conditions of the workers'. In the first class activities for the solution of problems such as hours of work, wages, holidays with pay, rest intervals, sanitation and safety, continuity of employment, limitation of female and juvenile labour may be included while all such schemes of benefits, cooperative societies, legal and medical aid and housing may be taken up in the second class.

The Problem of Agency

The problems of welfare are immense and cannot be tackled by one single agency successfully. There are certain measures which easily fit into the factory set up and therefore appropriately belong to the category of measures to be undertaken by the employer. These include for example canteens, creches and recreational facilities. Certain other measures like educational and medical facilities may be regarded as more appropriate subjects for State action. Sometimes the objection is raised that small employers cannot afford provision of costly amenities. In this connection, the following suggestion made by the All-India Trade Union Congress in their memorandum to the committee deserves consideration. "Some of the essential items, of welfare work should be provided in the Act itself and further regulations regarding details may be kept to be made by Rules. As there will be difficulties for enforcing some of the welfare activities, such as creches, washing and bathing facilities 'in the cases of small factories we suggest that some of these welfare activities should be made available in industrial areas for the general body of workers for whom no separate provision could be made by the employer, and these facilities should be made under municipal or government control, but may be financed by the employers."

Labour welfare work in India has usually been undertaken by

- (i) The employers ;
- (ii) The workers organisation ; and
- (iii) The State Governments.

(i) Welfare work by the employers

There are certain progressive and enlightened employers who have made some very good arrangements for the welfare of their workers. Such work may, briefly, be described here :¹

1. Cotton Textiles

Almost all the cotton mills maintain dispensaries where free medical treatment is given. Creches for children under the charge

¹ This Section is largely based on *Indian Labour Year Book*, 1953-4 (1955) pp. 268-282.

of lady experts exist in almost all the mills. There are also cheap grain shops and canteens. Some mills have also opened boarding houses where cheap meals are provided. Some of the mills also maintain schools for the children of the workers and in some literacy classes are held for adult workers. Facilities for indoor and outdoor games, provident and gratuity schemes exist in several mills. Recreation and entertainment facilities are provided by the radio, cinema shows, music contests, etc. These facilities have been provided in particular, by the Calico Mills of Ahmedabad, Elgin and J. K. Mills of Kanpur ; The Empress Group of Mills, Nagpur , the Delhi Cloth and General Mills and the Birla Cotton Mills, Delhi, the Jiyajee Rao Cotton Mills, Gwahor , the Buckingham and Carnatic Mills, Madras and the Cotton and Silk Mills of Madurai.

2 Jute Mill Industry

The only employer's organisation which has undertaken direct responsibility for organising welfare work for its member units is the Indian Jute Mills Association which has organised five labour welfare centres at Hazinagare, Kankinarrah, Serampore, Titagarh and Bhadreswar. These centres provide both indoor and outdoor recreational facilities for workers.

Medical facilities are provided by all the units in the industry. Most of the units maintain dispensaries usually under the charge of a qualified doctor. Two units in Andhra maintain a maternity home in addition to a dispensary. Two units in Kanpur formerly maintained dispensaries but with the introduction of the Employee's Health Insurance Scheme there, these units now provide only first aid facilities.

With the exception of 5 units in the membership of the Indian Jute Mills Association and one each in U. P. and Madhya Pradesh. All the units have canteens. Only Andhra units provide mid-day meals. In the rest tea and snacks are sold.

The number of schools run by the individual mills in West Bengal for the benefit of worker's children increased from 30 in 1949 to 32 in 1953. The number of schools attached to welfare centres of the Association, however, remained at 5. During the year 1953, over 1000 workers children were taught in the schools run by the association. Physical training, mass drill, gardening and handicraft form part of the school curriculum and special attention is paid to the development of these activities. Arrangement for holding sewing and cooking classes regularly for the benefit of girl students are also made in one of the centres. The Association also conducts adult education classes at every welfare centre with a view to removing illiteracy among workers, but despite all possible endeavour on the part of the welfare centre staff to make these classes popular, the response from workers is far from satisfactory.

Canteens have been established in 65 mills. Three new canteens are under construction. The grain shops which were established for the supply of rationed articles at controlled rates to Jute Mills workers are being closed down gradually as workers are buying their requirements from the market after decontrol of *atta* and rice.

3. Woollen Textile Industry

In the woollen textile industry generally, while some of the larger units have undertaken organised welfare activities, the smaller ones have been content with providing the minimum required under the Factories Act. The New Egerton Woollen Mills, Dhariwal, the Kanpur Woollen Mills, the Raymond Woollen Mills, and the Mahalakshmi Woollen Mills Bombay, maintain well equipped dispensaries under the charge of qualified doctors, only some of the larger units of the industry maintain creches. The large units and a few of the small ones maintain canteens, supplying tea and light refreshments, and in some cases, cooked meals to their employees. Facilities for the education of the workers and their children are also provided only by the large mills.

4. Engineering Industry

Most of the large units in the engineering industry, that is, those employing over 1000 workers maintain dispensaries for the treatment of their workers. Similarly, only large units run schools for the education of the workers' children although in some cases smaller units contribute financial aid to primary schools in their vicinity. The engineering firms do not generally employ women in large number but whenever they are so employed creches for the children are provided. The maintenance of industrial canteens is, however, more general and even the smaller units provide canteen for their workers. Facilities for workers' recreation are provided only in some of the large units.

Special mention should, however, be made of the welfare facilities provided by the Tata Iron and Steel Co. Jamshedpur. A hospital with 416 beds, 51 doctors, of whom 11 are specialists in different branches, and 114 nurses, six branch dispensaries suitably spread over the town and two First Aid posts inside the works at which qualified doctors are on duty day and night form the frame work of the medical facilities provided by the company. The expenditure incurred by the Steel Co. for the maintenance of the Medical department during 1953-54 was Rs. 23,65,350.

A number of rest houses for women workers and creches scattered over the plant are provided to take care of the babies while their mothers are at work. The company maintains three High Schools, 11 Middle Schools, 10 Primary Schools and a few

night schools for the education of the workers and their children. About 25,000 children attend the company's schools or schools aided by it. The welfare department arranges for games and tournaments of all kinds for which purpose large play-grounds are maintained.

Cement Industry

Most of the units have well equipped hospitals under the charge of qualified medical men, in which the workers as well as their families are given free medical treatment.

Most unit have also canteens supplying tea and snacks at cheap rates ; and almost all have clubs with provision for indoor and outdoor games and reading rooms. A few of these clubs have provision even for radio receivers, swimming pool and cinema shows for the workers. Most of them run cheap grainshops. Educational facilities exist in almost all the centres. School buildings and their equipment are supplied by the management and education is free. In a few cases, books, slates etc, are also supplied free to the workers' children. Most of the units employing women workers have provided creches.

Mines

The Coal and Mica Mines Labour Welfare Funds are now responsible for providing welfare facilities for workers in coal and mica mines. It has been reported that 28 coal mines have provided recreation grounds and 167 have provided play grounds for the workers ; 279 mines have provided schools for children and 13 run adult education centres.

The mining companies in Kolar Gold Field have provided to their employees various welfare amenities such as housing, medical recreational and educational facilities etc. There is a central welfare committee to co-ordinate the welfare activities in the entire field. During the calander year 1953 a sum of Rs. 1,63,837 was spent towards the distribution and subsidization of food grains under the gram supply scheme. A canteen started in 1947 on the Mysore mine attracted daily 640 persons on the average. In the Kolar Gold Field Hospital, where free medical relief is provided to the employees, the average attendance per day was 372 in the year 1953. The Mines Maternity Homes—four in number—continue to render useful service to worker's families. Out of a total of 3227 births in the mining area the number of children born in the Mines Maternity Homes was 3058 i.e., nearly 82 per cent. Also in accordance with the plan approved by the Government, three creches for the use of children under six were built during 1953. The fund maintains several primary schools, awarding scholarships and distributing slate, books and stationery

free of cost. It also supplies midday meals to school children at Nellore.

During 1954-55 the budget of the Fund Provided Rs. 11,66,00 for Bihar, Rs. 37,0,000 for Andhra, Rs. 3,46,000 for Rajasthan and Rs. 44,300 for Ajmer.

Plantations

All tea gardens in Assam and West Bengal maintain dispensaries under the charge of either qualified doctors or compounders for giving medical help to the workers. Most of the large estates maintain a garden hospital. Certain groups of gardens jointly maintain Medical Association with a Principal Medical Officer and a staff of qualified doctors. Some of these Associations run group hospitals and to which serious cases are sent by gardens which are members of the Association.

Although women are employed in large numbers on the plantations, adequate arrangements for the care of children while the mothers are at work, have not been made. In South India, however, most of the large estates set apart a room for the children or make some alternative arrangements for them to be looked after. Some estates also make arrangement for their feeding. Elementary schools for the education of workers children are maintained by most of the large estates.

A scheme for the construction of five welfare centres, five for men and five for women had been sanctioned by the Assam Labour Welfare Board. Three women's welfare centres have been completed. Welfare training courses for garden workers have been instituted at Rowrah Labour Welfare Training centre for men and at the women's Training centre at Borasale. There is a proposal to provide more funds for labour welfare measure out of the proceeds of the cess of Rs. 4 per 100 lbs under the Tea Act.

(ii) Activities of workers organisation.

The Textile Labour Association Ahmedabad, has several social activities designed for the betterment of its members. It conducts 25 Cultural and Social Centres Scattered all over the working class areas which provide a meeting place for workers who desire to pursue cultural activities. Here the workers arrange debates, discussions, group talks, seminars, meetings, study circles, social education classes, recreational programmes, etc.

The Association conducts three schools for the benefit of young working class children Two study homes, one in Asawara and another in Saraspur areas are being conducted by the Association since 1941. A girls hostel is being conducted by the

Association since 1927 and its inmates numbering 36 all belong to backward classes. They are taught, sewing, knitting embroidery, cooking, home keeping, etc., in addition to their daily attendance of their schools. Scholarships, are granted by the Textile Labour Association to working class children attending secondary schools as a measure of financial relief. During the Year 1953-54 a sum of Rs. 5940 was awarded as scholarships to 188 students.

The Association conducts 48 reading rooms and libraries in different parts of the city. During the year 1953-54 the membership of these reading rooms stood at 31,613.

With a view to rendering medical aid to the workers the Association runs Ayurvedic and Allopathic dispensaries and a maternity home. The total number of cases attended to in the Maternity Home were 7656 of which 610 were indoor patients. The Ayurvedic dispensaries served 12,780 patients and the Allopathic dispensary 9594 patients during the year 1953-54.

In the field of women's welfare seven centres each in charge of two lady social workers, are now run by the Association with the object of raising the status of women in society, providing instruction in useful arts and assisting in removing their difficulties. This activity is financed from the grant allotted by the Gandhi Memorial Fund.

The Association started a Co-operative Bank in 1947, the paid up capital of which amounted to Rs. 5,30,960 in March 1954. The workers had deposited a sum of Rs. 14,72,974 as at the end of the year. The loans granted to workers amounted to Rs. 50 lakhs. The affiliated Co-operative Societies number 48.

(iii) Labour welfare by the State Governments

For a long time the State Governments did not do anything besides enforcing the provisions contained in the Factories Act. During the 2nd War, welfare activities were undertaken to a great extent. In post-independence era, labour welfare centres have been established at various centres.

In Bombay there are four classes of such centres¹ A, B, C, and D. 'A' Class centres have a full-time nursery school for children; a women's section for providing literary, sewing and embroidery classes and suitable games, outdoor games and gymnasium with all facilities for men, and separate arrangements

¹ *Labour Investigation Committee, Main Report*, p. 348.

for water-taps and shower-baths for both men and women. Static as well as circulating libraries are attached to these centres ; radio sets are provided ; monthly cinema shows are arranged ; and well-equipped dispensaries are attached.

'B' Class centres are intended to be a replica of 'A' Class centres but on a very much smaller scale.

'C' Class centres provide indoor recreation and educational facilities, static and circulating libraries and dispensaries.

'D' Class centres provide only outdoor recreation such as games and sports.

During 1953-54, there were 54 labour welfare centres of which 5 were of 'A' type, 11 of 'B' type, 36 of 'C' and 2 of 'D' type.

These centres also provide for teaching of such handicrafts making such as toys, handkerchief, fancy embroidery, pull-overs and cardigans. The welfare centres also take active part in the 'anti-drink' propaganda. Free medical service is also provided at these centres. The expenses for these activities are met from the Labour Welfare Fund, 1953.

In U. P. the total number of welfare centres was 42 in 1953, of which 4 centres (at Ramkola, Khatauli, Balrampur and Raja-ka-Shaspur) were seasonal meant for the workers of sugar industry. Of the remaining 38, 14 were of 'A' Class ; 14 of 'B' Class and 10 of 'C' Class.

'A' Class centres provide medical aid, milk distribution and physical culture.

'B' Class centres provide instructional facilities such as libraries, reading rooms, adult schools, etc.

'C' Class centre provide entertainment.

Every welfare centre is equipped with a dispensary, a reading room and a library, a refreshment room, a gymnasium, co-operative store, a games room and a children's clinic. Soap, oil and change of clothes are provided free for the use of the children. Midwives and nurses attend to maternity cases in labour *ahata* and *bustees*. Tailoring classes are also held.

In West Bengal, there are 27 welfare centres, which provide facilities for indoor and outdoor games, adult literacy, education for children. Dispensaries are attached to twelve of these centre where the workers and their dependants get free medical attention and medicines.

Welfare work by the Central Government

The Government of India till recently did not undertake any activities to promote the welfare of industrial labour. However, with the outbreak of the war, the Government realised the need for the adoption of welfare measures as a means both to increase the workers productive efficiency and to keep up their morale. In January 1944 the Government instituted a Coal Mines Labour Welfare Fund to undertake activities conducive to the welfare of coal miners. The C. M. W. Fund has since begun its work and has sanctioned considerable sums of money for carrying on extensive anti-malaria work, provision of entertainment and construction of up-to-date hospitals in Jharia and Raniganj. In fact the Central Government has taken a keen interest in the establishment of canteens in factories and has persuaded Provincial Governments to take active steps in this connection.

Coal Mines Labour Welfare Fund

The Coal Mines Labour Housing and General Welfare Fund was constituted under the Coal Mines Labour Welfare Fund Act, 1947. During the year 1953-54 a total sum of Rs. 53.41 lakhs was spent for the fund on the various welfare schemes. Of this sum Rs. 7.63 lakhs were spent from the Housing Account and Rs. 45.78 lakhs from the General Welfare Account.

Hospital and Medical Facilities

During the year 1953-54 the Central Hospital at Dhanbad entered into the third year of its existence. It is one of the best equipped and staffed hospitals in the country and has two surgical operation theatres, one gynaecological operation theatre, two labour rooms, one plaster room, and a bed strength of 122. The pathological and radiological departments have arrangements for blood transfusion and electro therapeutics. The number of cases treated in the hospital during the year was :—

Out-patient department (new cases)

Male	6877
Female	2742
Child	1784

Total 11,403

In-patient department (new cases)

Male	1367
Female	679
Child	238

Total 2,284

The number of medical, surgical and maternity and gynaecological cases treated during the year was 19,568, 6,170 and 1,913 respectively.

X-Ray plants have been supplied by the Fund to the Barkui Hospital and Giridih Hospital. The indoor wards of the two T. B. clinics at Katras in the Jharia coalfield and at Searsole in the Raniganj coalfield started functioning in December 1953. The out-patient departments were started in May 1953.

During 1953-54 the Fund paid nearly Rs. 7000 as a recurring grant to the Dhanbad and District Leprosy Relief Association for the maintenance of 12 beds in the leprosy ward at Tetlumari in the Jharia Coalfield. The recurring grant of Rs. 2 per bed per day towards the cost of medicines, diet etc ; was increased to Rs. 3 per bed per day with effect from the 14th September 1953. Government sanctioned a non-recurring grant of Rs. 20,000 for the construction and recurring grant of Rs. 10,950 for the maintenance of a new leprosy ward to be constructed at Tetlumari.

Finances of the Fund

The welfare cess is levied at the rate of 6 annas per ton of coal and coke despatched for the collieries and was apportioned between the General Welfare Account and Housing Account in the ratio of 7:2. The receipts and expenditure of the Fund since its inception are given in the following table :

Year	General Welfare Account		Housing Account	
	Receipts Rs.	Expenditure Rs.	Receipts Rs.	Expenditure Rs.
1944-45	70,867	2,01,452	...	...
1945-46	58,29,343	2,25,284	...	...
1946-47	43,42,500	57,15,531	4,00,000	...
1947-48	50,70,964	22,93,034	11,18,862	6,46,485
1948-49	63,05,351	41,07,528	16,73,673	18,52,417
1949-50	47,11,298	55,22,048	66,99,159	30,26,547
1950-51	51,97,793	37,07,383	78,19,114	11,80,394
1951-52	86,03,634	55,47,111	22,76,949	14,36,660
1952-53	107,98,353	46,94,296	28,81,805	9,63,456
1953-54	96,52,149	45,78,427	29,43,623	7,62,632
Total	605,82,252	365,92,094	294,13,195	98,68,591

Mica Mines Labour Welfare Fund

During the year 1953-54 over 5000 workers in Bihar, 72874 in Andhra and 1847 in Rajasthan received medical aid under the Mica Mines Labour Welfare Fund. The beds at the Kodarma Hospital were reserved for the treatment of the mica-mine workers. In Bihar the multipurpose centre continued to function at Debour where workers and their families were afforded facilities such as (a) education and recreation for children, (b) Training of women in handicrafts and home science, (c) holding of literacy classes for adult workers, and (d) provision of childrens' play ground.

The total receipts of the fund during the year amounted to Rs. 13,43,974. The expenditure by States was as follows.

Bihar	Rs.	5,49,151
Andhra	Rs	1,12,733
Rajasthan	Rs.	28,152
Ajmer	Rs.	4,477

bringing the total expenditures to Rs. 6,94,494. The closing balance of the Fund at the end of the year 1953-54 was Rs. 1,22,42,415

Causes of Failure of Labour Welfare Work

Labour welfare work in India is yet feeling its way, its past history is a colossal and costly failure; and the future must be based on new principles, new outlook and new techniques. The failure of labour welfare work in the past is largely due to five factors, (a) lack of sincerity and of a scientific outlook, (b) the unhelpful attitude of the employers, (c) the suspicious attitude of the workers, (d) the dearth of well-trained social workers and (e) the inadequate relation of the State to labour welfare.

(a) In many cases labour welfare was carried out with a desire to curb the growth of the Trade Union and to conciliate labour. Even when social welfare was undertaken by kind, generous and humane employers, the attitude and outlook of charity and philanthropy, so widespread owing to the influence of religion in India, prevailed. There was no thought of such welfare being an integral part of their responsibility, an obligation they owed to the workers in the very act of employing them. Hence, no systematic and alround betterment of the latter was undertaken. When labour welfare was made legally compulsory on the employer it become a coercive burden on his unwilling shoulders and token welfare programmes were carried out to fulfil the mere letter of the law. Even where Labour Welfare Officers were appointed, their duties and functions were only remotely connected with the real welfare of the workers.

(b) Very few employers have yet accepted labour welfare-work as an indispensable part of industry. They hold that beyond the receipt of the wage—and may be a few occasional gratuities—the worker is not entitled to any other benefits. Industries cannot bear the burden of additional charges. Even if they can, it is not an investment, for the returns are not even commensurate. As a business proposition labour welfare work is indeed a liability. The employers have contracted with labour to pay for the pair of hands. If behind the pair of hands there is a personality to be cared for, the State should provide for its growth. If and when the industries can afford, the employers may start welfare work as a philanthropic endeavour. It is futile to criticise this attitude of the employers. It is the result of competitive individualistic economy. It claims profits and disclaims responsibilities.

(c) The workers suspicion and hostility towards their employers appears to be a reaction to the unhelpful attitude of the employers in general. The workers naturally look with suspicion on the welfare activities of their employers as a clever ruse to disrupt the solidarity of labour forces. They resent nothing so much as a show of charity towards them by their masters, nor is it fair for the latter to treat their employees as beggars or even as children. Indeed, in such an atmosphere of mutual distrust welfare work can least succeed. It is misconceived by the employers and misconstrued by the employees and the want of response on the part of the workers is a great deal responsible for the failure of labour welfare work.

(d) The dearth of trained welfare workers is another factor which has contributed to its failure. Neither the employers, nor the workers, nor even the general public have an appreciation of the importance of scientific welfare work. Trained in the traditions of individual charity, India is slowly realizing the role of institutional social work, group social work and individual case work. Persons who have managed labour welfare had neither the requisite knowledge of human nature and labour conditions, nor training in the techniques of welfare work. There are exceptional cases where able officers have been appointed. But, generally speaking, labour welfare management has been in the hands of raw personnel. In the hands of untrained personnel it is nothing surprising that labour welfare work should have failed of its essential purpose.

(e) Besides, labour welfare under State inspiration has proceeded slowly and unscientifically. Both legislation and practical action have been haphazard, illogical and ill-planned. Where labour has been directly sponsored by various Governments, the activities have been generally ill-mannered and the financial contribution almost niggardly and entirely inadequate. Any

scientific planning of labour welfare could have foreseen the need of extensive leadership of the right type and training, but measures for the creation of this leadership have been totally absent. The fundamental principle of social welfare is that "Action should follow knowledge" has never been applied by the State for the promotion of labour welfare.

Pre-Requisites for successful Welfare Work

Planning for labour welfare presupposes the acceptance of certain conditions which constitute the principles of labour welfare work. Welfare work can flourish only in an atmosphere of mutual trust and goodwill. Its success rests on the participation of the workers for whose benefit it exists. They can participate whole-heartedly when they have confidence in the government which represents the State and appreciate the sincerity of the employers. As a first step, therefore, the employer must disburden his age-old illness and mentally, accept labour welfare work as a most necessary part of industrial management.

What should be the scope of Labour Welfare Work?

It is somewhat difficult to accurately lay down the scope of labour welfare work. Welfare work is a comprehensive term. When it is applied to a flock of sheep or a herd of cattle it is easy to perceive the field of work and suggest a programme. But labour is composed of dynamic individuals with complex needs. In a world of changing values where ideologies are undergoing rapid transformation, rigid statements about the field of welfare work are bound to be revised from generation to generation. Moreover, labour welfare work is increasing with increasing opportunities and needs to meet varying situations. It is also increasing with the growing knowledge and experience of techniques. An able welfare officer would include in his programme what activity would conduce to the well-being of the worker and his family. He would work on the existing programmes as well as initiate new ones. The test of a welfare activity is that it removes, directly or indirectly, any hinderance, physical or mental, of the worker and restores to him the peace and joy of living.

Welfare activities fall into three categories—(A) Welfare activities inside the Factory or the work place, (B) Those outside the Factory or work place, (C) General welfare Measures. Welfare work embraces the worker, his wife and children. The following list, which is by no means exhaustive, gives the items under which welfare work should be conducted inside and outside the work place :—

I. Conditions of the Work Environment

1. Workshop Sanitation and Cleanliness must include :—

(a) Temperature, humidity, ventilation, lighting, elimination of dust, smoke, fumes and gases.

(b) Convenience and comfort during work, aperatives, pastures, sitting arrangements, etc. ;

(c) Distribution of work hours and provision for rest times, meal times, breaks ; and

(d) Workmens' safety measures.

2. Factory Sanitation and Cleanliness must consist of :—

(a) Urinals and lavatories ;

(b) Bathing facilities ;

(c) Provision for spittoons, water disposal, disposal of wastes and rubbish, general cleanliness,

(d) Cleanliness, white-washing and repair of buildings and workshops,

(e) Ingress, egress, passage and doors ;

(f) Care of open spaces, gardens and roads.

3. Provision and care of drinking water.

4. Canteen services.

5. Management of worker's Cloak rooms ; Rest rooms and library.

II. Worker's Health Service should aim at Providing :

1. *Factory Health Centre :*

(a) Playgrounds ; (b) Health education ; (c) Medical examination for workers ; (d) Health research.

2. *Factory Dispensary and Clinic for :*

(a) General treatment ; (b) Treatment of individual diseases ; 'fatigue ; (c) Treatment of accidents.

3. *Women and child welfare work :*

(a) Anti-natal and pre-natal care ; (b) Maternity Aid ; (c) Infant welfare ; (d) Creches ; (e) Women's general education.

4. *Worker's Recreation facilities :—*(a) Physical ; (b) Playgrounds ; (c) Outdoor life ; (d) Athletics ; (e) Gymnasium ; (f) Women's recreations.

5. *Education :—*Provision of Reading rooms ; Libraries ; Circulating library ; Visual education ; Pictorial education ; Lecture programme ; Debating Union ; Study Circles ; Education of workers, children ; Nursery schools ; Primary schools ; Women's

education ; general education with emphasis on hygiene, sex life, family life, family planning, child care, domestic economy, home handicrafts.

6. *Cultural Activities*.—(a) Musical Evenings and circles ; (b) Art circles ; (c) Folk songs and stories, (d) Histrionics ; (e) Folk dancing ; (f) Festival celebrations.

III. Labour Welfare Programme must consist of :

Factory Council consisting of representatives of labour and Employers, Workmen's Arbitration Council, Vocational and Job Adjustment, Social Welfare Departments, Cooperation with Personal Administration especially for case Investigation, Interview and vocational testing, Employment, follow up and research bureau.

IV. Labour's Economic Welfare programme should have :

Co-operatives or cost price shops for consumers necessities especially grain, vegetable, milk, meat, oils, and ghee, cloth and daily requirements, co-operative credit society, Thrift schemes and Savings Bank, Unemployment insurance, Health insurance, Employment bureau, Profit share and bonus schemes, Factory transport service.

V. General Welfare work should aim at

1. Housing.
2. Family case work.

Though every item of welfare work in the list is very important, special remarks may be made about a few ones. Health and education of the workers should receive the constant attention and care of the Personnel Officer. Indeed, there is no opportunity which cannot be utilized for the furtherance of the worker's health and education. By health we do not mean merely the absence of illness but the positive presence of vitality in the body and mind. This depends on the proper conditions of work, nourishing diets, sanitary conditions of living and wholesome and healthy habits. The Personnel Officer should secure all these for the workers, if they have to lead useful lives. He should insist on the management to make it possible for the workers to have these essential conditions for health. He may suggest improvements in the conditions of work, such as installation of exhaustion plants, humidifiers, cooling plants and other scientific devices, wherever necessary; he may inculcate in the workers the principles of making and taking a nutritive diet and, may be, even provide it through the mess or the canteen, he may plan housing and cause colonies

to be built, effect improvements in existing ones and supervise over living conditions, he may teach, by example and precept, the healthful habits of living. In all these cases the services of the medical officers or the colony medical officers are invaluable. Though the function of the hospital is obviously that of treating ailments and dispensing medicines, it should fulfill a positive and nobler role. The hospital should be made a centre for dispensing health knowledge, whether the person is at work or at play, at the bath or at his meal, health principles can be inculcated with reference to the changing context. In other words, the hospital with its officials should help the Personnel Officer in educating the worker to know and maintain healthful habits in his work, life, play, sex life, individual life and social life. The worker's wife and children should be similarly educated.

Likewise ubiquitous and versatile is the role of education. Without education a rich man's life is poor indeed, with it a poor man's life is rich. Education touches the entire life of the individual. While he is at work the worker should be made to adjust himself to his job, psychologically, physically and intellectually. While he is operating on the machine it is easy to teach him what the machine is like, and how it works. In the beginning he may learn the elementary principles and later have a knowledge of the complex design and structure of the machine, and finally know the history of its invention and its inventor. We believe this scientific knowledge on the part of our workers is not at all irrelevant and useless, though it may appear to be so, considering the present state of their abysmal ignorance. This knowledge at the machine, its working and its history has tremendous psychological effects on the worker. If proper educational facilities are provided from the beginning and a good atmosphere is maintained, the intelligent worker may even pursue his scientific interests and crown his career with fruitful achievements.

So far as the worker's wife is concerned her education must lay emphasis on hygiene, domestic economy (covering cooking, washing, etc.) sex life and child care. Practical education in knitting, tailoring, etc., should be given to her if she is not a worker. If she is a worker we discourage her from engaging herself in further work as it involves additional strain. Domestic duties, child care and companionship of her husband are by themselves sufficient to occupy her leisure hours. Concerning the children, their education should be the same as given to other children of the nation.

Techniques of Labour Welfare Work

What should be the techniques of labour welfare work? In spite of resources and clear statement of the objectives welfare

work is bound to fail if the techniques employed are wrong. Employment of techniques is an art and no hard and fast rules can be laid down for it at the outset it must be stated that for purposes of welfare work the, labourer, his wife and children have to be treated as one unit, while the respective needs of each have also to be kept in mind. One item of welfare work so far as possible has to be linked up with other items so as to present a chain of collateral successive or progressive activities. In other words one activity must be adjusted and related to another as one which should be simultaneous or one which should be followed as the next step. Life is multi-purposive no one activity should receive more attention at the cost of other activities.

As far as possible, workers should be actively associated in welfare work and every activity has to be conducted with their full consent and co-operation. Committees composed largely of workers and partly of the members of the management should be entrusted with the duties of adumbrating programmes and carrying them out. The Personnel Officer, who will be the General Chairman, will correct and discipline, guide and counsel, instruct and inspire the committees in their thinking and activities. The association of workers in welfare activities has great moral advantages. It creates confidence in the mind of the workers. It fosters public spirit, sense of responsibility and leadership qualities. It makes the workers self-reliant and able to manage their own problems. The crown and culmination of welfare work is to enable the worker himself to plan and carry out his welfare. The welfare work will have significance and purpose and the welfare department will have seen the fruition of its labours.

Leadership for welfare work

The welfare personnel constitute the leadership of welfare works. They are the moving spirit of welfare activities. Therefore, they have to be selected with great care and impartiality, with special regard to qualifications required for their functions. The personnel should be composed of honest and brave men and women, persons who have vision to design and independence to execute. It is most fundamental to realise that welfare officers are social engineers.

The persons incharge of welfare work should be those who have a profound knowledge of economic conditions and principles. Besides, they must have an understanding of human psychology. They should be able to judge independently and boldly meeting situations as they arise. Thus, for instance, an industrial strike creates a psychological situation. It is only persons who have quickly grasped the complex workings of the human mind and anticipate trends that can be useful in solving the problem.

Conclusion

Prof Kirkaldy rightly observes : "The whole field of welfare is one in which much can be done to combat the sense of frustration of the industrial worker, to relieve him of personal and family worries, to improve his health, to afford him a means of self-expression, to offer him some sphere in which he can excel all others, to help him to a wider conception of life. If within the field of welfare and particularly that part of which comprises sports and games a large measure of self-government can be left to the workers, even in the management of facilities provided by the employer, a sense of responsibility, initiative and co-operation can be fostered and often among those whose daily tasks afford them the least opportunity of developing characteristics so essential to industrial enterprise and wise citizenship."¹

Labour welfare has tremendous potentialities for fostering good industrial relations in India. Hence, we might use scientific procedures for labour welfare and organization and the labour force must be directed in right channels in our fast developing technological machinery.²

Ignorance, ill-health and dirt are the three giants labour welfare has to fight, in the home life, personal life, work life and community life of the workers. They have to be fought out steadily on all sides. In the coming years the labourers shall be made mightier than the machine with which he works, more fruitful than the dust on which he treads and richer than the earth into which he digs.

1. H. S. Kirkaldy, *The Spirit of Industrial Relations*, pp. 77-78

2. D. Yoder, *Economics of Labour Problems*, pp. 17-38.

SOCIAL SECURITY IN INDIA

Need for Social Security in India

The necessity of social insurance in India is urgent and we cannot afford toying the problem any more. The deteriorating conditions of the lower classes of the population, the growth of socialistic spirit, the decline in importance of the joint family system, caste assistance, communal charity; ill health and ignorance, preventable epidemic diseases, high infantile and maternal mortality among the labouring classes, prevalence of mal-nutrition and lack of health and medical relief services and the sufferings of our workers from many avoidable calamities of life such as sickness, invalidity, loss of employment and such other things resulting in the loss of income or earning power and the schemes evolved in other countries have made us realise that some thing must be done to ameliorate the appalling conditions of living of our masses, for it is an established fact that due to low income and its uncertainty, and with a number of dependants to support, it is not at all possible for labourers to provide for these risks unaided. And the absence of any provision of assisting them, either by the State or the employers or any private organisation except for the limited scope of Workmen's Compensation and Maternity Benefit Laws, bring them immense suffering and ruin to those dependants on them for support.

Further, it must be noted that in India social security has become imperative due to the present—maldistribution of income that has been seriously aggravated during the war period. This is a demand as much of social harmony and justice as of economic efficiency. For just as the employer must provide for wear and tear of machinery and renewal of adolescent and broken down machinery, so has he also to replenish the wear and tear of human muscles and capacities as a result of sickness, maternity, accident or old age, in the interest of the continuity of efficient production. Social insurance of one sort or the other, shall provide us with adequate remedy for many of our social ills. The individual and collective efforts of the employers, the individual and the collective agitation of the employees and the piecemeal legislative efforts of the State must be considered and coordinated for the greatest good of the greatest number. Such efforts culminate in Social Insurance. "Social Insurance is a beacon which affirms the ideal of democracy and lights the way to further progress. Under it empiricism is replaced by careful diagnosis,

improvisation gives way to method and dilettantism to technique."¹

Conception of Social Security

The I. L. O. Publication observes : "Social security is the security that society furnishes through appropriate organisation, against certain risks to which its members are exposed. These risks are essentially contingencies against which the individual of small means cannot effectively provide by his own ability or foresight alone or even in private combination with his fellows. It is characteristic of these contingencies that they imperil the ability of the working man to support himself and his dependents in health and decency. Accordingly, as the State is an association of citizens which exists for their sake of their general well being, it is a proper function of the State to promote social security. While all State policy has security services only such scheme as provide the citizen with benefits designed to prevent or cure diseases, to support when unable to earn, and to restore him to gainful activity. Not all such measures, can be considered as affording security. For security is a state of mind as well as an objective fact. To enjoy security one must have confidence that the benefits will be available when required and in order to, obtain security the protection must be adequate in quality and quantity."

State Social Security is now considered in all advanced countries of the world as an indispensable chapter of the national programme to strike at the root of poverty, unemployment and disease. Its connotation is gradually being extended and amplified. According to J. S. Clarke : "the underlying idea and philosophy of social security is community planning, community responsibility, community standard of citizen duties and citizen rights "To banish poverty," "to make wants under circumstances unnecessary" and 'to provide a minimum of level of well-being or the people" are some of the targets aimed at." Its avowed object is to "make possible for many, nay for all, or better for each—that full and total life of personality which to so large an extent is even still the exclusive possession of the few." According to the Social Security Committee in U S A. it includes "Security for employment, security in the availability of employment, security of reasonable standard of working conditions ; security of some income while unemployed, security of retirement ; income of recreation, of self improvement ; of medical and hospital assistance ; security of one's family in case of one's accident, invalidity, ill health or death." Mr. Beveridge says : "In a sense ;

the poorer you are, the more you need it (social security) by maintaining your health you increase your efficiency." It will thus be seen that "Social Security is a device to pool together nation's prosperity."

Social Security defined

Social Assistance and Social Insurance are considered to be two elements of social security. While social assistance refers, broadly speaking, to the assistance rendered by the society to poor and needy persons voluntarily, without placing any obligation on them to make certain contributions for becoming entitled to relief, such as workmen's compensation, maternity benefits, old age pensions, unemployment assistance, medical assistance, mother's pensions, etc., Social Insurance refers to a scheme of maintaining an insurance fund or the organisation of provision—out of tripartite contribution from the workers, employers and the State for a need which cannot be left safely and entirely to the individual's or employers' own resources—and to grant out of it such benefits as sickness, injury, maternity, unemployment, old age pension, etc.

Social Insurance provision may be viewed as no more than the gathering together of a fund to meet contingencies whose total dimensions are uncertain, but whose appearance in some form or other is certain. These contingencies fall under the heads of sickness, maternity, invalidism, unemployment, old age and death. All these contingencies involve loss of earnings—partial or total—and benefits under the scheme are made available after certain objective tests of eligibility (which are statutorily prescribed) and the amount to be made available being likewise prescribed. The object of such insurance is (i) to prevent those losses of productive life and capacity that can be avoided, (ii) to ensure that each makes the best possible use of his or her facilities, (iii) to ensure equality of opportunity and attainment of these triple ends, to accord due respect to the inalienable values of individual dignity and liberty.

The following three requirements have been held necessary for a scheme to be designated as social security :

(a) the aim of the system must be either to give curative or preventive medical care, or to guarantee income in the case of involuntary loss of all or a large part of income from work or to grant additional income to persons with dependents ;

(b) the system must be instituted by legislation which attributes certain individual rights to or imposes definite obligations upon, a public, partly public autonomous organisation, or

(c) the system must be administered by a public, partly public or autonomous organisation.

These criteria have led to the inclusion of the following schemes under the 'Social Security' programme :—

- (i) Compulsory social insurance.
- (ii) Certain systems of voluntary social insurance.
- (iii) Special schemes for public employees.
- (iv) Family allowances.
- (v) Public assistance.
- (vi) Public health services.
- (vii) Benefits to war victims.

The following table gives a part of the data compiled by the I. L. O's study of the costs of social security schemes in different countries of the world¹.

Country.	In millions of Unit of National Currency	In % of National Income 1949	Total Expenses per head of popu- lation	Average annual expenses of Social Security per head
Australia	130.33	6.9	16.72	47
Belgium	32,181.1	12.8	3,376	75
Canada	912.1	7.0	68.54	62
Denmark	1,483.1	9.0	353.0	62
Finland	28,349.1	9.8	7,059	31
France	948,343	13.7	22,852	65
Germany	11,061	17.1	232.4	55
Italy	667,787	10.8	14,518	25
Netherland	1,188.8	8.4	119.4	42
New Zealand	61.78	14.8	33.41	114
Norway	820.3	8.5	255.1	50
Sweden	2,533.4	11.3	364.2	88
Switzerland	777.02	4.6	167.5	39
U.S.Africa	30.63	3.7	2.56	10
U K.	1,173.5	11.3	23.27	87
U. S. A.	10,482.1	4.8	71.13	71

¹ *Trade Commerce*, Vol. LXXXVI No. 2205, p. 902

All schemes of Social Insurance should be based on a wide knowledge of social pathology and a study of the causes and effects of common industrial risks. The incidence and severity of these industrial risks vary from country to country. These variations are due to the age, level of earnings, the security and certainty of jobs, and the number and nature of dependants they have to support and such other factors. It must be noted that higher the income, the greater the security and smaller the number of dependants, better the workers are prepared to face such risks. Labourers in advanced countries in the world, in spite of all handicaps that their occupations involve, are fairly well placed through their individual and collective efforts, so far as these matters are concerned. On the other hand, with the active participation of the State and others in these matters through various devices such as poor relief, social assistance and social insurance, they have succeeded more or less in conquering these risks or in providing adequately to meet them successfully. Unfortunately in India, the utter helplessness of the Indian Labour is quite well known. There is no effort on their part either individually or collectively to provide for the contingencies for their meagre income is a great obstacle in their way. Similarly, efforts by the state or others to stand by them in their distress are almost unknown in this country. The reason is that the whole problem is beset with a number of difficulties, financial and administrative, and others such as the immensity of population, its phenomenal poverty, the lack of reliable data, the primitive character of sanitary measures and the absence of an effective public opinion conscious of the claims to a full human life. The Indian labourers is still migratory and unorganised, illiterate and ignorant, their wages are still so low as to render them unable to make contributions to any scheme of insurance. But it is desirable that those who want assistance must also co-operate in the building of this fund. Right and duty go together. If any one is to be entitled to get the benefits, he must be asked to do his duty also. Without that he himself would miss the significance of his right.

Before taking up a detailed study of the schemes of social insurance as developed in India and suggesting improvements in it, it will be beneficial to know something about the nature and purpose of such measures and the developments that have taken place in these fields in some advanced countries of the world.

Technique and Benefits of Social Security

The *raison-de etre* of any social security programme is, no doubt, the necessity of an equitable distribution of the profits and burdens, gains and hazards of an industrial civilisation. An industrial community cannot endure without an equitable sharing of both the rewards and hazards. No country can enjoy

stable industrial peace nor quickly progress in industrialisation if it permits all the profits of industry to be enjoyed by the employers, and the hazards of industry borne only by those who are least able to bear them. Some equalisation of the purchasing power of the different social classes is the *sine qua non* of individual progress.

So far as the means of providing social security are concerned there are several alternatives available to the State. The State can organise it single-handed without counting on the sources or co-operation of any party or organisation, or it can work in conjunction with some private bodies or voluntary organisations for the benefits of the employees, which is not associated with the organisation either through contributions or by participating in its administration. The State can also enlist the resources and co-operation of the party for whom such schemes are primarily meant along with other parties in organising social security. The first two methods (which have been generally called the methods of *poor relief* and *social assistance* respectively) have been extensively adopted by different Governments. The last method known as *Social Insurance* is of comparatively recent origin. Now the first two methods are being progressively replaced by the third one in organising social security in every advanced country in the world.

// For enjoying the right type of security people must have the confidence that the benefits will be available when required and the protection will be adequate, both in quality and quantity. Social Insurance which modifies the resources of all the different parties in the country the workers and the employers and the State and which work with their active participation in its organisation has been found most effectively suited for this purpose is guaranteeing security to the workers. It has been defined "as the scheme which provides benefits for persons of small means granted as of right in amounts which combine the contributive efforts of the insured with subsidies from the employer and the State".

It might take different forms so far as details of organisation and awards of benefits are concerned, according to the proportions or nature of contributions made by different parties or methods of paying them and the nature and extent of the control and supervision exercised by the State. But every genuine scheme of social insurance granting protection to the participants against the contingencies insured against, but working for service and not for profit; must have (1) element of compulsion in participation and payment of contribution and (2) participation of the State.

Universality of scope is the essence of the modern conception of Social Insurance as illustrated in the Beveridge and Marsh Reports and the Wagner-Murray Dingell Bill, and its practical

application in Denmark, Bulgaria and New Zealand. Social Insurance fosters a fresh, active solidarity in industry. It promises the worker support in the struggle for life. It responds to mankind's deep-seated yearning for freedom from fear through its promise of freedom from want. It exercises the spectre of anxiety. Almost every industrial advanced country in the world has recognised the importance of social insurance. Austria, Czechoslovakia, Poland, Estonia, France, Greece, Hungary, Japan, Yugoslavia and Lithuania have moved in the direction of equal contribution by employers and employees; in these countries the State does not contribute anything. Bulgaria and Latvia have, on the other hand, moved in the direction of equal contribution by employers, employees and the State. In Great Britain, employers and employees make equal contribution and the State a smaller one. Germany and Norwegian schemes envisage employees contributing a larger sum than the employers; while in the U. S. S. R. the total cost is borne by the employers. Thus each country has evolved a scheme suited to its own particular requirements with due regard to world forces.

Social Insurance had a comparatively modest beginning. It first began in Germany in 1883 in a very modest form and covered only a few risks to which the workers are exposed. But since then it has recorded a continuous growth, thereby bringing other risks like sickness, accidents, old age and infirmity too under its ambit. Beginning from Germany, it has spread over different parts of the world and secondly, from a few risks covered in the original scheme, it now includes almost all the risks of life and lastly, it concerns itself more and more with preventive and restorative functions rather than merely with the payment of cost benefits. This process of growth is still being maintained and it goes on developing itself in quantity and quality to meet the varied needs of an expanding labour population in a rapidly changing world.

Few countries in the world can bear comparison with Great Britain in her organisation of various public social services and her colossal expenditure as these. There the Old Age Pension Act was passed in 1903 which was followed by Health Insurance Act 1920-34; Unemployment Insurance Act 1920-34, the Widows, Orphans Old Age and Pension Acts 1925-32, etc. Her total expenditure on unemployment insurance and allowances, old age pensions and widows' and orphans' contributory pensions comes to about £ 300 millions. The new step in the evolution of the system operating in England is the introduction of Beveridge Plan which envisages complete compulsory State Insurance against every form of personal want and insecurity, sickness, unemployment, maternity, widowhood and health, and would cost the State about £ 500 millions, the remainder of the total cost estimated at

about £800 millions, being met out of the contributions from people with incomes, at the rate of about 5 sh. weekly per head and from the employers. Thus a man and his family are to be insured in respect of all eventualities which either cause an interruption in earnings or an exceptional increase in expenditure.

Development of Social Security in India

Looking at India we find that we have been lagging very much behind in this field. The State in India has scarcely yet deviated from the traditional policy of *laissez faire* in this respect. The famine relief measures cannot be described as ensuring social security, these are measures of humanitarian relief meted out to actually starving population in the event of actual shortage of food. No doubt there were the Workmen's Compensation Act, 1923, the Maternity Benefits Act of many State Governments which covered risks of this nature for those workers to whom the laws were applicable. But the benefits received under these Acts were in the nature of social assistance and not social insurance. *Secondly*, they covered only a minor part of the distress of the industrial worker. *Thirdly*, the payment was the sole responsibility of the employer and the worker was not liable, in any way, to pay any contributions

As far back as 1927 the International Labour Conference at its 10th session recognised that compulsory sickness insurance provides the best means of "constantly and systematically applying provident measures to obviate or make good any loss of the worker's productive efficiency" and adopted a Draft Convention on the subject of Sickness Insurance imposing on the States an obligation to set up a system of compulsory sickness insurance. The Convention was not ratified by the Government of India and sickness insurance never became a reality. The Royal Commission on Labour considered it well and, however, pointed out certain difficulties in the way of evolving a scheme of sickness insurance. *Firstly*, they said, "The main difficulties include following the workers to their villages, arranging for proper medical treatment there and providing for medical certification, in order to enable workers to obtain extended benefits should sickness continue. The lack of faith in modern medical methods is still one important factor, and the administrative expenses likely to be incurred in working on a national or even on provincial scale a system of insurance based on western lines would probably be extremely heavy. But none of these arguments diminish due need of the worker for provision during sickness."¹

¹ Report of the Royal Commission on Labour, p. 265.

Secondly, they pointed out that essential preliminary to the framing of a satisfactory scheme does not exist. "What is required is an estimate of the incidence of sickness among workers whom the scheme is designed to cover. Without this it is impossible even to guess at the cost of any benefits which it is desired to provide or conversely, the benefits which can be secured from any given contributions. The collection of the necessary materials is the first task which should be undertaken."¹

In 1933, the International Labour Conference adopted Draft Conventions regarding Invalidity, Old Age, Widows' and Orphan's Insurance. The Government of India, however, refused to ratify these Conventions on the ground of financial and administrative difficulties. The question of old age was also raised in the Legislative Assembly in 1937. The Government of India once again refused to give the proposal any serious consideration.

Later on, the Kanpur Labour Enquiry Committee also examined this question and upheld the recommendations and view of Royal Commission on Labour and also made recommendations for some provision for unemployment and old age benefits.² The Bombay Textile Labour Enquiry Committee also agreed in this respect of 1940 to have such scheme and gave an outline of the main features. It also recommended that a scheme of unemployment insurance should be devised and brought into operation in Bombay and Ahmedabad.³

But the first concrete measure embodying the principles of Social Insurance is not only very late in coming in our country but the interest in it is also of comparatively recent origin. Before the Second World War there was some talk about the necessity of social insurance for industrial workers in India. But all proposals for enacting any scheme were set aside on the plea that whatever might be the merit of such a scheme the condition in the country was not suitable and no such measure could succeed. It was in the course of the Second World War that the Government took interest in the matter and this question was put up three times in the Labour Ministers' Conference in 1940-41 and 1942 and a tentative scheme was also placed before the Third Conference by the Government of India. It was decided at this Conference that an Officer on Special Duty should be appointed to draft a scheme of health insurance and accordingly Prof. B. P. Adarkar was appointed as Officer on Special Duty to draft the scheme. He submitted his report on 15th August, 1944.

1 *Report of the Royal Commission on Labour* 1931, pp 265-267.

2 *K. L. E. C. Report*, 1938, p. 59.

3 *Bombay Textile Labour Inquiry Committee Report*, 1940, p. 333.

Prof. Adarkar's scheme was based on four assumptions :—

- (i) The early adoption of a scheme of Unemployment Insurance on a restricted basis and the creation of new employments in the post-war period ;
- (ii) The establishment of a scheme of Old Age Pensions ;
- (iii) Adoption of certain pre-medical measures, such as regulation of wages ; rigorous enforcement of factory laws and regulation relating to hours of work, conditions of work, safety, ventilation and hygiene ;
- (i) Commencement of a National Health Drive.

The scheme formulated by him was broad-based on the following fundamental principles :—

- (i) The scheme must be compulsory ;
- (ii) It must be contributory ;
- (iii) It must be simple, clear and straight-forward ;
- (iv) It must be the existing frame-work of labour legislation as its formal basis ;
- (v) It must not be too ambitious in the beginning ;
- (vi) It must be financially sound, economical in working and actuarially balanced ;
- (vii) It must minimise disputes and litigation ;
- (viii) It must be workable in the peculiar circumstances of Indian labour and industry ;
- (ix) It must be in conformity with international labour conventions ;
- (x) It must not be saddled with financial responsibilities which belong to other measures of social security ; and
- (xi) It must be sufficiently flexible.

This scheme was to cover all textiles, engineering of every kind and the processing of metals and minerals. But it was not to apply to (i) seasonal factories ; (ii) employment in the armed forces of the Crown ; (iii) employment in the Public Departments ; (iv) factories in what are sparsely populated areas ; (v) private factories and (vi) employment in public vitality concerns.

The proposals made by Prof. Adarkar in his Report were examined by two I. L. O. experts M/s Stack and Rao, who visited India at the invitation of the Government of India. They agreed with the fundamental principles of Adarkar's Scheme, but suggested two modifications. *Firstly*, these were in connection with the organisation of medical service and *secondly*, they related to the integration of maternity benefits and the workmen's compensation within the framework of Health Insurance Scheme. "They proposed the inclusion of non-manual workers on equal terms with manual workers, irrespective of their income; the grasping together of those branches of insurance which called for medical service, namely, sickness, maternity and employment injury; the determination of an inclusive contribution for all risks; the provision of a grant from taxation; the treatment of the family as a unit; the adequate grant of cash benefits; and finally a simplification of the rules and administration."

In the light of their recommendations and Prof. Adarkar's Report as main basis a unified scheme of Social Security to cover health insurance, maternity benefits and employment injury was prepared. A Bill known as the Workmen's State Insurance Bill and based on a Unified Scheme was introduced in the Central Legislative Assembly in November, 1946. This was finally passed as the Employees' State Insurance Act in April, 1948 incorporating some changes in the original Bill in the course of its progress through the Assembly and the Select Committee to which it was referred.

Besides this, the measures which afford Social Security to the industrial workers in the country at present are the Employees' Provident Fund Act, 1952; The Coal Mines Provident Fund and Bonus Schemes Act 1948; the Workmen's Compensation Act, 1923 and the States' Maternity Benefits Acts.

Special Features of the Employees' State Insurance Act

The main provisions of the Employees' State Insurance Act 1948 are as follows :

(1) It applies to all the employees including the clerical and supervisory staff, but not to those whose income exceeds Rs. 400/- per month, who are employed in perennial factories coming under the Indian Factories Act. From 22nd January 1955, the Government of India exempted, for one year, from the payment of employers' special contribution payable vide Chapter V-A of the Act all factories wherein the principal employer employed less than 10 workers at any time during the preceding 12 months even though 20 or more were working in the premises. Further the Governments are authorised to apply the Act to any other establishment, industrial, commercial, agricultural or otherwise,

after due consultation with the Employees' State Insurance Corporation and with the approval of the Government of India. The Act is applicable to whole of India except Jammu and Kashmir.

(2) The scheme is administered by an autonomous body called the Employees' State Insurance Corporation. It consists of the Minister of Labour and the representative of the Central and State Governments, employers, employees, the medical profession and the Parliament, numbering in all to 38. The affairs of the Corporation are administered by a Standing Committee constituted from amongst the members of the Corporation. A Medical Benefit Council set up for this purpose advises the Corporation on matters relating to the administration of medical benefits and such other matters. The Corporation may direct the formation of Regional Bodies on the model of the Central Corporation. The chief executive officer of the Corporation is the Director-General, who is assisted by four other Principal Officers mentioned in the Act.

(3) The activities of the Corporation are financed by the Employees' State Insurance Fund, derived mainly from contributions made by the employers and employees, while a part of it also come as grants or donations from the Central and State Governments and others. Contributions by the employers and workers except those workers whose daily wages are less than Re. 1/- are compulsory. No worker is authorised to contract out. During the initial period of 5 years the Central Government was to contribute two-thirds of the administrative expenses of the Corporation.

Every employer and employee coming under the scope of the Act and where the scheme is enforced is required to make, for each week during the whole or part of which the worker is employed, weekly contributions to the fund according to a scale prescribed in the Act. The rates of contributions, both of the employees and the employers are fixed on a graduated scale, which rises according to the rise in the daily wages of the worker. Contribution is to be paid only by the employer and not by the worker if his daily wage is less than rupee one.

The weekly contributions of the employers in respect of a worker whose daily wages are less than Re. 1/8 has been fixed at As. 7 per week. The contribution rises to Rs. 2/8 for workers whose daily wages are Rs. 8/- and above. The contribution of the worker whose daily wages are less than Re. 1/8 but not below Re. 1/- has been fixed at 2 annas per week. This rises to Re. 1/4 per

week for those whose daily wages are Rs. 8/- and above as given in the table below :—

Group of employees receiving wages				Employees' Contribution			Employers' Contribution			Total Contribution		
Below Re. 1/-				Nil			0 7 0			0 7 0		
Above Re. 1/- but below 1/8				0	2	0	0	7	0	0	9	0
„	1/8-	„	2/-	0	4	0	0	8	0	0	12	0
„	2/-	„	3/-	0	6	0	0	12	0	1	2	0
„	3/-	„	4/-	0	8	0	1	0	0	1	8	0
„	4/-	„	6/-	0	11	0	1	6	0	2	1	0
„	6/-	„	8/-	0	15	0	1	14	0	2	13	0
„	8/-			1	4	0	2	8	0	3	12	0

(4). The workers are insured against three kinds of risks :—
 (a) Sickness, (b) Employment injury and (c) Maternity. Insured workers or their dependants are entitled to five types of benefits *viz*, (i) sickness benefits, (ii) Maternity benefit, (iii) Disablement benefit, (iv) Dependants' benefit and (v) Medical benefit.

Sickness Benefit

It is payable for a maximum limit of 8 weeks in any continuous period of one year, if sickness is certified by a duly appointed medical practitioner. But only those insured workers are entitled to it who have completed the qualifying period for which contribution has been made and which has been fixed at a minimum of 12 weekly contributions in the preceding 26 weeks, before any benefit is granted to him. No benefit will be paid for an initial period of 2 days, except in cases when the worker falls sick for a second time within 15 days. The benefit is payable for a maximum number of 56 days in any continuous period of 365 days. The daily rate of benefits amounts to 7/12ths of his average wages. A person in receipt of benefit is required to remain under medical treatment at a dispensary or other medical institution provided under the Act.

The rate of sickness benefit is determined in the following manner :—

Group of Employees	Average Assumed Daily Wages	Rs. as p	
1. Average daily wages below Re. 1/-		0	14 0
2. Average daily wages Re. 1 and above			
but below Rs. 1/8/-		1	4 0
„ Rs. 1/8 and above			
3. but below Rs. 2/-		1	12 0
4. „ Rs. 2/- and above			
but below Rs. 3/-		2	8 0
5. „ Rs. 3/- and above			
but below Rs. 4/-		3	8 0
6. „ Rs. 4/- and above			
but below Rs. 6/-		5	0 0
7. „ Rs. 6/- and above			
but below Rs. 8/-		7	0 0
8. „ Rs. 8/- and above		10	0 0

Maternity Benefit

It is payable to an insured woman worker at the rate of 12 annas per day for a period of 2 weeks of which not more than 6 can precede the expected date of confinement. A woman worker is entitled to the benefit only when she has paid at least 26 weekly contributions within a period of 12 months immediately preceding the confinement week or the week in which she gives notice of pregnancy and at least 5 out of the said 26 contributions shall have been paid before 35 weeks preceding the week in which confinement takes place or notice of pregnancy is given.

Disablement Benefit

An insured worker suffering from temporary or partial permanent or total disablement as result of an employment injury is entitled to disablement benefit. The disablement benefit is an amount equivalent to one-half of the

average daily wages for each of the weeks for which contributions are paid in respect of the workmen during the period of 52 weeks immediately preceding the week in which claim falls due divided by the number of weeks for which contributions were so paid.

The proportion of the full rate at which and the period for which the disablement benefit is payable are as follows : —

<i>Nature of disablement</i>	<i>Rate of cash benefit</i>
1. Temporary disablement	During the period of disability at the full rate.
2. Permanent partial disablement	At a percentage of full rate as provided in section 4 of the Workmen's Compensation Act for life.
3. Permanent total disablement	At the full rate for life.

Dependant Benefit

The dependants of an insured are entitled to dependant's benefits in case of deaths of the worker as a result of an employment injury. The rates of benefits are different according to the relationship of the dependants to the deceased ; the total number of recipients and some other conditions, *e.g.* (a) $\frac{3}{5}$ th of the full rate to the widow, for life as long as she does not remarry ; (b) $\frac{2}{5}$ ths of the full rate to each legitimate or adopted son upto the age of 15 ; and (c) $\frac{2}{5}$ ths of the full rate to each legitimate unmarried daughters upto the age of 15.

The benefit of any son or daughter may be continued till the age of 18 if he or she continues education to the satisfaction of the corporation.

As will be seen, both the disablement benefit and the dependant's benefit are payments against the same risk but to different persons and at different rates. Both these risks were covered by the Workmen's Compensation Act of 1923 (as amended in 1926, 1929 and 1933). In case of disablement or death, as a result of unemployment injury the worker or his dependant was entitled to compensation or damages. Under the old Act benefit or compensation was to be in lump sum but under the present Act it is to be in instalments. The Workmen's Compensation Act ceases to operate in those establishments which come under the present Act and when it is fully implemented, but in other establishments where it is not made applicable the Workmen's Compensation Act will continue to be in force.

The Workmen's Compensation Act provides for the payment of compensation to the employee by the employer in case of injury

caused by accident arising out of and in the cause of employment. It is not payable if the incapacity does not last for more than 7 days, or if the injury, not resulting in death is caused by the default of the worker (due to the influence of drink, drugs, wilful disobedience of an order, etc.)

The amount of compensation payable depend upon the nature of the injury and the average monthly wages of the workers concerned. Compensation is payable for death, permanent total disablement, permanent partial disablement and temporary disablement. For death of adults, the rate of compensation varies from Rs. 500 (in case of persons with monthly wages below Rs. 10) to Rs. 4,500 in case of those getting above Rs. 300 per month. For the permanent total disablement of adults, the rate of compensation varies from Rs. 700 to Rs. 6,300. For minors, the rate is uniform—Rs. 200 for death and Rs. 1,200 as compensation for permanent total disablement. The following table gives the rates of compensation for different wage classes :—

Monthly wages of the workman injured		Amount of compensation for—		Half monthly payment as compensation for Temporary disablement of Adult
		Death of Adult	Permanent Total Disablement of Adult	
More than Rs. 0	But not more than Rs. 10	Rs. 500	Rs. 700	Half his monthly wages
10	15	550	770	5 0
15	18	600	840	6 0
18	21	630	882	7 0
21	24	720	1,008	8 0
24	27	810	1,134	8 8
27	30	900	1,260	9 0
30	35	1,050	1,470	9 8
35	40	1,200	1,680	10 0
40	45	1,350	1,890	11 4
45	50	1,500	2,100	12 8
50	60	1,800	2,520	15 0
60	70	2,100	2,940	17 8
70	80	2,400	3,360	20 0
80	100	3,000	4,200	25 0
100	200	3,500	4,900	30 0
200	...	4,000	5,600	30 0

4. This schedule was substituted by Sec. 23 of the Workmen's Compensation (Amendment) Act, 1933.

The following table shows the number of accidents and the amount of compensation paid, under this Act, during certain years¹:—

NUMBER OF REPORTED ACCIDENTS AND THE AMOUNT OF COMPENSATION PAID DURING CERTAIN SPECIFIED YEARS

Year	Number of accidents resulting in				Compensation paid for			
	Death	Permanent disablement	Temporary disablement	Total	Death	Permanent disablement	Temporary disablement	Total
					Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.
1929	888	1345	16632	18865	587390	397177	275597	1260164
1934	598	1287	15005	16890	371762	294131	202954	868847
1939	832	1929	35920	33681	581080	516444	411803	1509327
1945	1253	3943	62194	67390	1330644	2030576	864119	4225339
1946 ²	1154	3536	50551	55241	1368681	1303113	954014	3625808
1947 ³	1011	3228	49335	53574	1179087	1209974	937434	3326495
1948 ⁴	1032	3850	61894	66776	1580450	1615390	1024228	4220068
1949 ⁵	1063	3973	55475	60511	1876568	2026420	1320174	5217162
1950	969	4160	56663	61950	2029940	2264725	1438401	5733066
1951 ⁶	1087	4391	57655	63133	2207532	2293424	1397297	5898253
1952	1040	4308	53386	58734	2007687	2288011	1341672	5637370
1953	1212	4547	55983	61742	2341131	2315447	1481811	6138389

¹ *Indian Labour Year Book*, 1953-54, p. 94.

² Excluding Punjab and Sind.

³ Relate to all States of the Indian

⁴ Figures for 1948 and subsequent years relate to all States of the Indian Union which were formerly known as Provinces, except the Punjab, provinces.

⁵ Figures have been revised, which were formerly known as

Medical Benefit

Provisions regarding the grant of medical benefit are more liberal than those regarding the grant of sickness benefit and medical benefit starts before a person becomes entitled to it for any week during which contributions are payable in respect of him or in which he or she is qualified to claim sickness benefit, maternity benefit or disablement benefit. Medical benefit consists of free medical treatment in case of sickness, employment injury and maternity. Medical treatment shall include medical, surgical and obstetric treatment. The treatment may be given either as an out-patient treatment or treatment as an in-patient in a hospital or treatment at an Insurance Dispensary. It may also be given by visits of the Insurance Doctors to the houses of the insured persons. Facilities for medical treatment and attendance may also be made available to the family of an insured worker, if the Corporation is in a position to do so. It has been estimated that in the beginning the cost of medical care will come to Rs. 6/- per insured worker per year.

(5) State Governments are also required to constitute Employees' Insurance Court in their States for the adjudication of disputes and claims with regard to the matters relating to the daily rates of wages, contributions, benefits, etc. With a view to gaining experience and minimising mistakes, it was decided that the Corporation should experiment a part of the scheme with a small pilot scheme covering the centrally administered areas of Delhi and Ajmer.

From the study of the above Act a few interesting features emerge:

Firstly, the scheme is one of insurance in which payments or contributions are to be made by the worker and also by the employer on his behalf before the worker becomes entitled to any of the benefits which the Act provides.

Secondly, of the five types of benefits to which the workers are entitled, two are new benefits—sickness benefit and medical benefit for which there was no legal provisions before. For the other three there was already provision in some form under the existing laws.

Thirdly, it includes the non-manual workers such as clerks and supervisory staff on the same terms as manual workers; without any regard of income as such.

Fourthly, although the contribution of the employers is more than double of the worker, equal representation has been given to the worker, as it should be with the employers both in the Corporation and the Standing Committee.

Fifthly, unlike many other countries all the risks are covered by a singly all-inclusive contribution.

Lastly, it includes a class of non-contributory beneficiaries, who are entitled to the same kind of benefit as the contributory class.

Limitations of the Scheme

This Act has several limitations such as:

(i) The scheme suffers from a number of limitations. Its scope is very limited and it caters to a section of the wage earners only (workers engaged in factories only). It is not applicable to large number of such workers, not to speak of agricultural wage earners. State Governments are authorised to extend its application after proper consultation with the Corporation. It is doubtful whether any State Government will think of doing it in near future.

(ii) The sickness benefit is linked to a comparatively short period of time. In many cases 8 weeks will not be enough. Benefits will stop before the worker has recovered or his earning power has been restored. Notification dated 29th January 1955 provides that a person suffering from tuberculosis shall be entitled to medical benefit for an additional half-month for every contribution period, in which not less than 12 contributions have been payable in respect of him subject to a maximum of two years for the total treatment. In most of the countries the normal maximum period has been fixed at 26 weeks.

(iii) Under the scheme certain types of sickness are excluded for the purpose of cash benefits but not for medical benefit. This is not fair, some cash benefit, not exceeding half the cash benefit granted in other types of insurance, should have been provided. Such benefits would have reduced the hardships of the recipients.

(iv) Also for the present, the scheme does not provide for convalescent home benefits, dental benefits, sanatorium benefits and the classes of benefits known as Additional Benefits, in Adarkar's scheme.

(v) Another limitation is that it does not cover a number of risks. Unemployment benefit is out of the question at this stage, but some provision should have been made for the old-age benefits in cash and medical treatment. The number of recipients would not be many and the benefit given on a small scale would not cost much.

In spite of all these limitations the Act is a beginning in the right direction. With experience from the working of the present scheme the organisation of the administrative machinery and with improved income of the workers, the scheme should be expanded so that more workers are brought under it and the insured workers enjoy longer benefits, both in cash and in kind.

Progress of the Scheme

The provisions of the Employees' State Insurance Act are to be introduced in phases, at different places in the country and as such the whole of the Act, except the chapters relating to benefit provisions, were first enforced in the Kanpur area and Delhi State from February 24, 1953, covering about 1,20,000 employees. On May 19, 1953, it came into operation in the seven industrial towns of the Punjab, i. e. Amritsar, Ambala, Jullundar, Ludhiana, Abdullapur, Jagadhari, Batala and Bhivani, where it covers 30,000 employees. It was extended to Nagpur on July 11, 1954 and Greater Bombay on October 2nd, and in Coimbatore, Indore, Gwalior, Ujjain and Ratlam on January 23, 1955. By the end of 1954-55 or the beginning of 1955-56 the scheme had been implemented in the city of Calcutta, Howrah District; Ahmedabad, Hyderabad, Secunderabad, Bangalore, Aleppy, Quilon, Trichur, Alwaye and Ernakulam. By the end of 1955-56 it was expected that it will have been introduced in all industrial centres with a concentration of two thousand or more workers, thus bringing about 2 million workers under the scheme. At present the scheme covers more than 11 lakh workers. During 1955-56, Rs. 84.72 lakhs were paid as sickness, maternity, disablement and dependents' benefit and Rs. 51.10 lakhs were spent on medical benefits.

Employees' Provident Fund Act, 1952

Another piece of legislation on such direction was the Employees' Provident Fund Act, which was passed on the 4th March 1952 and amended in 1953. For the present the Act applies to Cement, Cigarette, Electrical, Mechanical or General Engineering Iron and Steel, Paper and Textile industries employing 50 or more persons. The scheme now covers 4,000 factories and 17 lakh workers. The collections so far amounted to over Rs 73 crores.¹ The employers' contribution to the fund has been fixed at 6½ per cent of the basic wages and dearness allowances payable to the employees and the employees too contribute equal amount. The total amount of the provident fund contributions collected from factories and invested in actual Government securities amounted to Rs. 32 crores (up to the end of November, 1954.) The scheme is in operation in 20 States. The scheme is administered by a Board of Trustees at the centre and by State Boards in States.

¹ *India*, 1957. p 379

The Coal Mines Provident Fund Scheme

The Coal Mines Provident Fund Scheme was framed in December, 1948, and came into force in the coal mining areas of West Bengal, Bihar, Orissa, Madhya Pradesh and with slight modifications it has now been extended to Assam, Rewa, Talchar, Korea and the partially extended areas of Madhya Pradesh. A bonus scheme called the Rajasthan Coal Mines Bonus Scheme, to be applicable to the Palana colliery, came into force from April 1, 1954. Any worker who qualifies for bonus is eligible to join the fund and rates have been fixed according to income groups.

The following table shows statistics relating to benefit given to workers in different areas. —

*Cash and other Benefits given under the Scheme 1953-54**

Area	Attendance at Dispensaries	No. of cases admitted in Hospital	No. of domiciliary visits paid	Disability claim		Dependents benefits		Sickness benefits		Maternity benefits	
				No. of accident reports received	No. of disability claims admitted	Total amount paid	No. of claims paid	Total amount paid	No. of claims paid	Total amount paid	No. of claims paid
Delhi	4,07,996	511	2,612	3,183	3,271	Rs 66,972	Rs 2,126	26,703	Rs 4,69,045	40	Rs 2,402
Punjab	2,87,994	480	3,408	1,308	927	12,919	3	3,525	350	3,8472	...
Kanpur	3,33,020	1,400	9,154	5,511	2,378	39,714	4	2,933	71,561	10,42,650	28
Total	15,29,010	2,391	15,474	10,002	6,576	1,69,605	12	8,584	98,703	15,15,542	68

¹ From 17th May 1954 to 3rd March 1954

² Became payable with effect from 13th February 1954

* Indian Labour Year Book, 1953-54, p. 101

The Act provides for a minimum contribution of ten annas per month by those whose basic wages are upto Rs. 10 per month and a maximum contribution of Rs. 15 per month for those with basic wages of over Rs. 200 per month with an equal contribution by the employer. By December 1954 nearly Rs. 4 58 crores were collected both from the employees and employers. The membership of the fund is over 6 lakhs. By December, 1952, as many as 6,712 employees had been paid their deposits on retirement, resignations, etc. The total assets of the Fund amounted to Rs. 6 5 crores on 30th June, 1956. Interest at the rate of 3½ per cent is payable to the subscribers. It is also administered by a Board of Trustees at the Centre and the administrative staff on their accumulation.

The following table shows the number of workers who earned bonus and the amount of bonus paid during 1953-54.

*Number of Workers who earned Bonus and the Amount of Bonus paid during 1953-54 in Certain States **

Quarter ending	No. of collieries to which the bonus scheme applied	No. of collieries submitting returns.	No. of workers employed in collieries submitting returns	No. of workers who qualified for Bonus	Amount of Bonus disbursed
<i>Bihar</i>					
June 1953	626	142	1,60,663	61,314	9,16,767
September 1953	626	167	1,03,219	60,017	10,95,413
December 1953	626	110	68,965	35,476	5,31,096
March 1954	626	153	68,180	40,779	8,41,164
<i>W. Bengal</i>					
June 1953	234	71	64,841	27,678	4,91,855
September 1953	234	81	68,965	25,095	4,50,028
December 1953	234	60	46,100	18,112	3,48,808
March 1954	234	95	71,771	29,476	5,61,435
<i>Orissa</i>					
June 1953	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil
September 1953	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil
December 1953	7	2	5,089	1,835	47,707
March 1954	7	2	4,005	2,005	44,305
<i>Vindhya Pradesh</i>					
June 1953	7	3	2,470	1,678	35,734
September 1953	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil
December 1953	7	4	4,037	2,106	44,060
March 1954	7	2	1,951	1,174	26,183

*Based on the information supplied by the Regional Commissioner (Central) Dhanbad.

(Labour Year Book, 1953-54, (1955) p. 103.

Maternity Benefit Acts

Legislation controlling the payment of Maternity benefits is in operation in almost all the States of the Indian Union and a few have had Acts of other States extended to their territory. The only Central Act on the subject applies to the mines. The qualifying period, rates of benefit and amount of benefit vary considerably. The qualifying period is 150 days under the Assam Maternity Benefit Act and the West Bengal Maternity Benefit (Tea Estates) Act, 240 days under the Madras Act, 12 months under the Cochin Act, two months under Bihar, U. P. and Central Acts and 9 months under the rest. The period of benefit is 12 weeks under the Hyderabad and West Bengal (Tea Estates) Act, 7 weeks under the Madras Act, 60 days under the Punjab Act and 8 weeks under the rest. The amount of benefit is annas 12 a day under the Punjab, Hyderabad and Central Acts. $11\frac{1}{2}$ annas a day, excluding the usual food concessions, under the Assam Act, Rs $5\frac{1}{4}$ a week under the West Bengal (Tea Estates) Act and annas 8 a day or the average daily earning, whichever is higher, under the rest. Provisions for free medical help, creches and additional rest intervals have also been made under some Acts. The employment of women during maternity periods is a penal offence. A woman found employed during a benefit period is deprived of her statutory benefits. Besides the benefits enumerated above, a cash bonus of Rs. 5 under the Bihar and U. P. Acts and of Rs. 3 under the Central Act is also payable to women utilising the services of qualified nurses or midwives at the time of confinement. Orissa and Rajasthan States have enacted separate measures for their respective areas. In the year 1950, nearly 66,822 women claimed maternity benefit and out of those 64,614 women were paid maternity benefit in full or in part and the total amount paid was approximately Rs. 28,45,116.

Suggestions

It would have been clear that in India the need for some sort of social security has been urgently felt since long. The priorities in the structure of social security in India should be scaled down in the following order :—

(1) The adoption of the *Minimum Wage Policy* beginning with all unskilled workers in all industries and rising to semi-skilled and skilled workers to begin with. Any programme of social security without minimum wage fixation is to put the cart before the horse.

(2) *Sickness Insurance* provided by a fund created by contributions from the employers, the workers and the State and aided

1 Fuller details about Maternity Benefit will be found on Chapter in Women Labour.

by a State medical service panel. The respective monthly contributions should be 6 as. and 4 as. The sickness benefit may be distributed in this manner. No benefit is given for the first 6 months but before completing a year's insurance from the fourth day of incapacity 6 as. per diem should be given. On completion of a year's insurance, from the fourth day of incapacity 10 annas per day should be given. These benefits should not accrue to workers in cases where compensation for accidents under the Workmen's Compensation Act or Maternity benefits were provided.

(3) *Unemployment Insurance.* The above three items are interdependent, and without living wage a compulsory scheme of sickness insurance scheme is necessary as it aids towards the maintenance of moral self-respect and the balancing between benefits and costs in the minds of the people. But contributions cannot be expected if the workers do not obtain a living wage nor are sure of their employment without fair wages. The incidence of illness and disablement cannot also be brought down. With unemployment insurance neither a living wage nor protection against sickness is of any avail.

For starting unemployment insurance schemes the best methods of approach would be the introduction of voluntary scheme assisted by Government subsidies. Thus the employers should be encouraged to set up Unemployment Relief Funds for the payment of gratuities to discharged workers, according to the length of their service, the Local Government contributing a quota equal to the relief offered to the body of discharged and unemployed workers. At the same time Government should start or subsidize relief works designed in particular to provide employment for unskilled workers. Such an unemployment insurance scheme should after the end of five years be dovetailed into a wider scheme of relief and unemployment of a permanent character. This is essentially a long-term problem and is largely connected with the vicissitudes of Indian agriculture with the average agriculturists income varying from Rs. 15 to 25 per annum and with about 12% unemployed among all workers in India, group insurance of agricultural crops and livestock, supplemented by social assistance through : (a) the relief of destitution, expanding the technique of famine code, and (b) the establishment of a network of State rural hospitals and dispensaries would represent the real beginnings of social security for the masses of the Indian population.

(4) *Pension for old-age.* Workers of the lower grades in India cannot save out of their low earning against old age, invalidity or unemployment and for this purpose it is necessary that the Government should make rules enforcing a scheme of Provident Fund for all permanent workers in an establishment employing more than

600 workers. Under the scheme all permanent workers shall join the Provident Fund and contribute to it 1/12 of their wages per mensem, the management also subscribing an equal amount. In mines, engineering firms and other establishments where work is of a particularly irksome or hazardous nature, a scheme of retiring gratuity should also be introduced, subject to the exemptions which may be granted by Government on ground of financial position of particular establishments without adequate provision against old age, invalidity and unemployment, it would be idle to expect quicker development of a permanent labour force in our industrial centres.

Finally, no programme of social security can realize its full objectives unless there is strong, effective organised unionism. Along with the five Giants of Beveridge on the road to reconstruction to be attacked and killed, *viz.*, Want, Disease, Ignorance, Squalor and Unemployment, there is also a sixth giant in India, *viz.* Dismissal or Victimization for Trade Union Work. That has also to be tackled by legislation. Special security should, therefore, be planned and co-ordinated for the establishment of real national minimum. A piecemeal programme of security is bound to defeat its own purpose.

CHAPTER XIV

TRADE UNION MOVEMENT

Introduction

The trade union movement is modern in all countries and is the result of the factory system and concentration of industry, which have dissolved the old personal ties, between employers and workers and made the bargaining between them impersonal and cold-blooded. The unorganised workers of a large employer have little bargaining power owing to their dependence, immobility, lack of reserve funds, and the perishability of labour. By removing or minimising these handicaps trade unions strengthen their bargaining power and secure them higher wages and better conditions of work, thereby helping them to raise their standard of living. The trade union movement is an important indication of social unrest and social progress. The workers in all countries are becoming increasingly dissatisfied with their dependence upon employers and their conditions of work and life, and trade unions are increasing everywhere for protecting their interests when they come into conflict with those of their employers, and for serving as mutual benefit societies

Trade Union : Its Definition and Chief Features

Before proceeding further let us see what is meant by a Trade Union. A Trade Union has been defined variously by different authors. Sidney and Beatrice Webb define a Trade Union as, "a continuous association for wage-earners for the purpose of maintaining or improving the conditions of their working lives."¹ This definition has certain limitations. A trade union may combine any class of employed workers; its purpose may extend outside the working lives of the members and its functions may be wider than merely maintaining and improving working conditions, if such conditions relate only to wages, hours and conditions of the working lives in their places of employment.² Another authority defines a trade union as "a monopolistic combination of wage-earners who as individual producers are complementary to one another but who stand to employers in relation to dependence for the sale of their labour and even for its production; and that the general purpose of the association is in view of that dependence to strengthen their power to bargain with the employers."³ Yet another definition runs as, "A Trade

¹ Webb, *History of Trade Unionism*, p. 1.

² Cunrison, *Labour Organisation*, p. 13

³ N. M. Joshi, *Trade Union Movement in India*, p. 1.

Union is essentially an organisation of employees, not of employers nor of the co-partners, nor of independent workers"¹ The Indian Trade Unions Act of 1926 defines a trade union as, "any combination whether temporary or permanent, formed primarily for the purpose of regulating the relations between workmen or employers or between workmen and workmen, between employers and employees, or for imposing restrictive conditions on the conduct of any trade or business, and include any federation of two or more Trade Unions."

On analysing the above definitions we find that there are certain characteristics that are common to them all. They are :

(i) One feature is that they are all associations either of employers, employees or of independent workers. Thus, Indian Trade Unions may comprise of merchants' associations, employers' organisations, general labour unions, friendly societies or combination of intellectual labour.

(ii) The second feature is that their fundamental purpose is the pursuit of the interest of their members and of the trade they represent. There may be differences of opinion as to the devices and methods of organisation but the main aim of all of them is to safeguard the interest of their members. Thus majority of the unions in India are for the collective bargaining; some collect funds for mutual insurance; while a few try to bring pressure upon the Government to pass favourable labour legislations.

Objects of Trade Unions

The object of the Trade Unions may also vary in details. Some unions try to solve only economic problems relating to conditions of employment as hours of work, wages, etc. Some have before them social problems as education and cultural progress of their members. Whatever the objects may be all unions have one aim in common and that is to look after the welfare of their members. Bearing these two features of the trade unionism in mind, Dr. Punekar defines a trade union "as a continuous association of persons in industry, whether employers, employees or independent workers—formed primarily for the purpose of the pursuit of the interests of its members and of the trade they represent."²

History of Growth

45

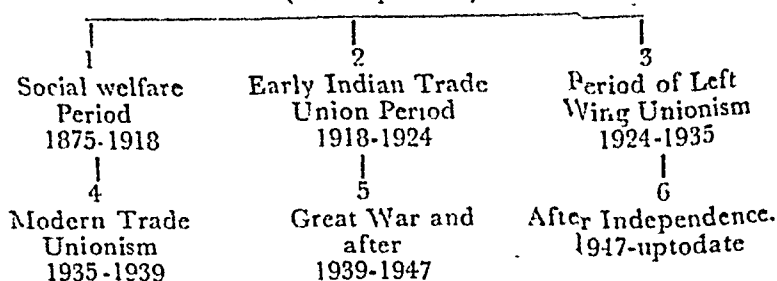
The history of Indian Labour Movement from 1857 upto date can be divided into six distinct parts, each of them revealing.

1 A. C. Jones, *Trade Unionism Today*, p. 3.

2 S. D. Punekar, *Trade Unionism in India*, p. 23.

different tendencies that mark it from the others :—

History of Labour Movement
(1875 upto date)



1. Social Welfare Period (1875-1918)

It is marked by various moderate, constitutional methods, such as investigations, memorials, petitions, legal enactments, conferences and public commissions. The organisations formed during this period cannot rightly be called trade unions as they were loose organisations. They lacked definite aims and constitution and the leaders mostly worked in an advisory capacity. The labour movement at this stage was unorganised and social in character. This period has, therefore been called the *Social Welfare Period* of our early labour movement.

Dr. Rajni Kant Dass divides this period (1875-1918) into two parts¹: first the *Regulation Period* (1875-1891) when the child and woman labour in factories was regulated by legislation and second the *Abolition Period* (1891-1917) when a successful protest was made against the indentured system by which Indian labourers were sent out to British colonies. In the first period, the movement was loosely organised and the movement was purely social in character. The second period was the movement captured and led by intellectuals and many social and political organisations along with the press, championed the cause of labour against the indentured system.

In 1875, Mr. Sorabjee Shahpurjee Bengalee started an agitation for drawing the attention of the Government to the deplorable conditions obtaining among industrial workers especially women and children. Again N. M. Lokhande, who started his career as a factory worker, dedicated his whole life to the cause of labour movement. In 1884 Mr. Lokhande and his followers sent a petition to the Government asking for adequate protection and organised a mammoth meeting of about 10,000 factory workers in Bombay, at which a representation was made to the Bombay Millowners' Association for the grant of a weekly holiday, half an hour's recess at noon every working day, regular monthly payment of wages and an adequate compensation in case of an accident. These demands

¹ R. K. Dass, *Factory Labour in India*.

were happily conceded. This led to the formation of first Indian Labour Union the "*Bombay Mill-hands' Association*" in 1890 under the able leadership of Mr. Lokhande. He also started a labour journal named '*Dinbandhu*' (Friend of Poor).

The most noticeable features of this period (1875-1918) are : (i) the complete absence of radicalism in the labour movement. The main causes for it were the non-realisation of the evils of modern industrialism, the character of the proletariat, small in number weak and poor, the absence of class-consciousness and hence of class conflicts, lack of radical leader and of the press, absence of revolutionary doctrines, and the dominance of the Indian National Movement, which threw all other movements in the background.¹

(ii) Another feature is their spontaneous growth, *i.e.*, formation as the need was felt. The origin of unionism lies in the revolt of the working people against the degradation of human life and oppressive influence of industrialism.

(iii) The third feature of our early labour associations is that they made easy progress among the educated class of workers such as fruiterers, postal clerks and the railway employees. The growth had not been uniform in all industries and services. It did not make much headway in more important and more organised industries of India, namely, textiles, mining and plantation.

Unfortunately, the movement received a setback on the death of the two pioneers, and nothing very remarkable happened during the succeeding years.² It was only the Great War that gave a new turn to the Indian Labour Movement. Two or three years following the war saw the formation of a large number of labour organisation strike committees, welfare associations and the like.

Thus the Indian trade union was the product of a number of factors: (i) the class consciousness and class solidarity, (ii) industrial unrest due to the grave economic difficulties created by the war of 1914-18, (iii) the profound influence of the Swaraj Movement of the Indian National Congress which intensified the trade union movement, widened the gulf between the employers and the employees, obscured the justice of many of the workers, demands and supplying willing leader to the new movement and (iv) the Russian Revolution of 1917 and (v) the establishment of the International Labour Organisation and All-India Trade Union Congress. The Indian Labour Movement was, at this stage, in transition passing from the Mutual Aid and Friendly Societies to that of active trade unionism.

1 R. K. Dass, *Labour Movement in India*, Chapter v.

2 S. G. Panandikar, *Industrial Labour in India*, pp 155-167.

2. Early Indian Trade Union Period (1918-1924)

This period is called the *Early Indian Trade Union Period*, because it was this period that gave stability to the trade union movement. The movement, though guided by the politicians, was industrial in character and was the outcome of the post-war industrial unrest. It was after the end of the Great War in 1918 that the first trade union in India was started in Madras by the initiation of Mr. B. P. Wadia.¹ The year 1918 gave a new turn to the Indian Labour Movement, when seven new unions were also started, important among them being the Labour Union, Madras, Indian Seamen's Union, Calcutta and Clerks Union, Bombay. Out of these 7 unions, 4 were started in Madras, 2 in Bombay and 1 in Calcutta. In 1919, 10 more unions were started out of which 5 were in Bombay, 2 in Madras, 1 each in Bengal, U. P. and the Punjab. Important among these were the Employees' Association, Calcutta, M. and S. M. Railway Employees' Union, Madras. In 1920 trade unionism had spread to most of the provinces and in some of the industries.

It was established for the purpose of co-ordinating the activities of all labour organisations in India. There were three factors that proved propitious to its growth: (i) the boom conditions in Industry, (ii) the influenza epidemic of 1918-19 (which had taken a toll of more than 8 million people of the country's inhabitants) and (iii) the most important, the great influence of the International Labour Organisation.²

The total number of unions affiliated to it was 125 with membership of 2,50,000. All India Trade Union Congress came into existence in 1920.³ This was formed to enable organised labour to send its delegates to the International Labour Conference. It was only during this year that the most strongly organised labour union, namely Ahmedabad Textile Labour Association was formed. It was Gandhiji's contribution to the labour movement in this country and Gandhiji himself had referred to the Ahmedabad Textile Labour Association as his *laboratory for labour work*. It began to hold its session every year from 1920 at different centres and the enthusiasm generated by it led to the creation of several new unions. The Congress has served as a meeting place for all the leaders of the movement, as a platform for the formulation of labour policy and as a link between trade unionism in India and Europe." The constitution of this Congress followed that of British Trade Union Congress. It laid for itself as its objects the co-ordination of activities of all labour organisation in all the trades and in all the provinces in India and the furtherance of the

¹ B. Shiva Rao, *Industrial Labour in India*, p. 13.

² H. P. Ora and U. B. Kotdawala, *An Introduction to Industrial Labour Welfare*, p. 80.

³ S. D. Punekar, *Trade Unionism in India*, p. 78.

interests of Indian labour in matters of economic, social and political conditions. The Congress also expressed its willingness to co-operate and federate with organisations of labour with similar objects in other parts of the world. The constitution and the work of the Congress consisted practically entirely of the outsiders. This Congress did a great deal to focus attention on some of the real needs and problems of labour. At every annual session it passed resolutions drawing the attention of the Government to urgent reforms, the defects of administration of existing legislation or the necessity for the introduction of new measures such as Workmen's Breach of Contract Act, Madras Planters' Labour Act, etc.

But there were no unions among the agricultural, mining and jute labourers though strong, well-built unions arose in railways, shipping, textiles, engineering and communication.

From 1921, the unprecedented prosperity experienced by our industries in the immediate post-war period began to disappear. With depression in industry, the Labour Movement also experienced a period of acute difficulties. The serious economic situation at that time brought into existence a number of labour associations, a great majority of which were loose organisations formed for some temporary and immediate purpose such as getting enhanced wages, if possible, without strikes, but if not, with them. Many of them were little more than Strike Committees formed to provide or carry on a strike and cease to function after the strike has ended. They had no definite constitution, published no accounts and their officers had not assigned functions, even the objects of the unions were unstated in some cases. The movement had developed mostly in the Provinces of Bombay, Bengal, Madras and in the textile, communications and Government concerns, where a majority of the educated classes are to be met with. The growth of unionism, however, was not uniform in all branches of industries and services. Some of the unions, like Jamshedpur Labour Association, Bombay Textile Labour Union, Girni Kamgar Mahamandal, Bombay were strong, well-built and commanded membership in thousands, while a majority of the unions were loose organisations with insignificant membership. There were no unions among the plantation and agricultural labourers. All India Railwaymen's Federation was founded in 1928 and practically all the Railway Unions got affiliated to it. This Railwaymen's Federation has to this day remained one of the strongest labour organisations in the country. It was affiliated to AITUC,

3. Period of Left Wing Unionism (1924-1935)

To promote a healthy growth of the trade union movement by protecting legitimate trade unions, giving them status and

dissociating them from political propaganda by which they may conceal their aims and jeopardise their usefulness, and to protect the ignorant and superstitious workers from fraud and imposture to which they can be easily subjected, an Act called the Indian Trade Union Act was passed in 1926 and came in force on 1st May, 1927. This Act is a landmark in the history of the progress of the trade unionism. Under this Act every Provincial Government has appointed a Registrar of Trade Unions.

Since the passing of this Act the trade union movement has developed more rapidly, both as regards the number of new unions, owing to the increasing willingness of the employers to recognise unions registered under the Act. Moreover, a considerable improvement in the conduct and administration of the registered unions and in the proper maintenance of accounts and registers of members has become noticeable.

It was at this stage of our labour movement that for the first time in 1924 militant elements emerged from within the ranks of labour. By 1924 the Communists had started working in the movement. They introduced politics into its activities, and since then the organisation has become an arena for a struggle between conflicting political ideologies. Through their militancy they secured a large following among workers in industrial centres and became all-powerful in the All India Trade Union Congress, which had till then been entirely under the leadership of the older moderate leaders who wanted it to hold itself aloof from politics. The Communists regarded the economic struggle as an integral part of the politics, and looked upon trade union battles for higher wages, shorter working hours, better working conditions and the like as dress rehearsals of the political struggle for capture of power. They pinned their faith on the militant spirit of industrial workers so that they conducted violent, protracted strikes. Their influence grew so strong that the Government had to stage in 1929 "one of the longest and costliest trials of the world, which lasted for four and half years and involved a total cost of about Rs. 160,000. The moderates who were stigmatized as weak-kneed lost their hold in several industrial centres. This struggle resulted in bitter strife in All India Trade Union Congress at its Nagpur session in December 1929, under the presidentship of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, over the issues of boycott of the Whitley Commission and affiliation of the A. I. T. U. C. to the Pacific Trade Union Secretariat—a camouflaged Communist Organisation. Resolutions on both the points were passed by a narrow majority, and thereupon the moderates led by Mr. N. M. Joshi walked out of the A. I. T. U. C., declaring their resolve to form a new rival organisation. The Communists succeeded in carrying through their policy.

The success of the Communists was mainly due to the affiliation of the Congress to the G. I. P. Railwaymen's Union and the Bombay Girni Kamgar Union which claimed 41,000 and 54,000 members securing the support of the left-wing nationalists. At this time in the whole country there were 184 unions with a membership of almost 4 lakhs. The moderate trade unionists formed the Indian Trade Union Federation in 1930. Thus a split occurred in the A. I. T. U. C.

In the meantime the original body (A. I. T. U. C) experienced another split in 1931 at the Calcutta session, this time the reason being the representation of the Bombay Girni Kamgar Union on the Executive Council and the fundamental differences between the Communists and the other left-wing unionists. The Communists with hardly a dozen unions under their control, formed the *Red Trade Union Congress*. Indian Trade Unionism at this time was divided into four groups, three of which had their own National Federations : (i) the Red Trade Union Congress represented the Communists, (ii) the Original Trade Union Congress had the Radicals under its command, (iii) while the Indian Trade Union Federation indicated the moderate element in trade unionism. (iv) the fourth group included the semi-socialist All India Railwaymen's Federation, the Economic National Union of Railwaymen, the Reformist Ahmedabad Labour Association and many other unions not attached to any central organisation. This was the largest group of all, consisting of organisations with diverse opinions, methods and policies.

Such a state of divided Labour Movement was naturally thought undesirable and soon after the first split, attempts at Trade Union Unity began through the efforts of the Roy Group on the basis of a 'Platform of Unity' embodying the basic principles of the Trade Union Movement. The initiative taken by the All India Railwaymen's Federation had shown fruitful results. This Federation formed the Trade Union Unity Committee in 1932 which considered the demands of the workers and laid down certain broad conclusions agreeable to both the wings of Labour—the Indian Trade Union Federation and the Trade Union Congress. The final session of the Unity Conference took place in February 1933 in Delhi, which was attended by both the I. T. U. Federation and the T. U. Congress, wherein the Draft Constitution was accepted and was put into practice by the establishment of the National Federation of Labour—a provisional body to facilitate the attempts towards unity. The I. T. U. Federation amalgamated itself with the National Federation of Labour under the new name of National Trade Union Federation. At the same time the Red Trade Union Congress also amalgamated with the original A. I. T. U. Congress. Negotiations now took place between the A. I. T. U. Congress and the N. T. U. Federation and in 1935 were held joint meetings and

the conferences of the representatives of the two national federations of labour.

4. Modern Trade Unionism (1935-1939).

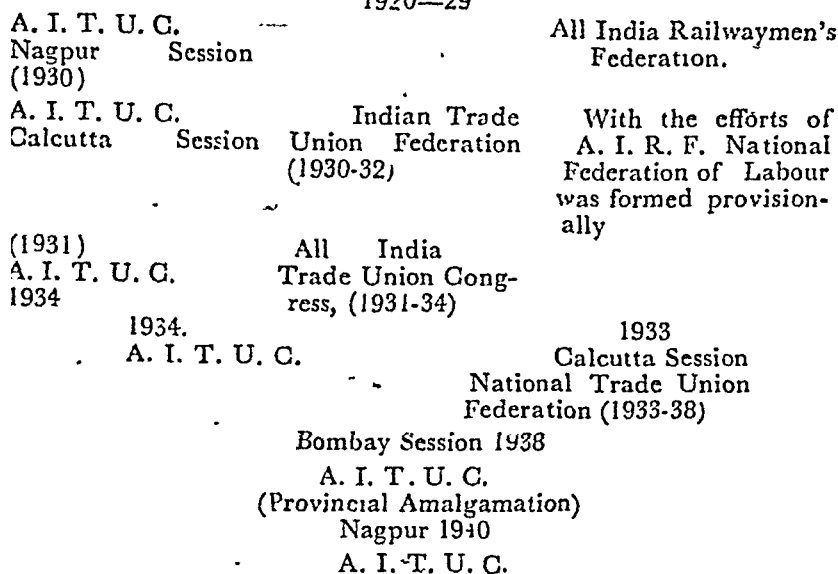
Industrial unrest which was on decline after 1929 again showed an active growth in 1934. Most of the strikes were waged for increase of wages. The year 1934 saw a wave of strikes sweeping the industrial centres of Bombay, Sholapur and Nagpur, which were followed by the general strikes of Kanpur (1937-38), the Jute workers' strike of Calcutta (1938) the Digboi Oil Fields Strike (1939) and the U. P. Glass Factories Strike, Firozabad (1939). This increasing industrial unrest brought with it an improvement both in the number and membership of the registered trade unions, number of which increased from 241 in 1935-36 to 555 in 1938-39. The real reason behind the increase was the newly granted labour representation in legislatures, either through trade union constituencies or the special labour constituencies.

When the Congress Government assumed charge in seven provinces new possibilities arose for the Indian Labour. "The inauguration of the Provincial Autonomy, the greater freedom exercised by the workers, the large-scale reforms to which political parties like the Congress were pledged, the larger representation accorded to organised labour in the various Provincial Assemblies and the diminishing attitude of hostility on the part of several employers towards trade unionism have resulted in a more active spread of the movement in recent years.

In 1938, a Joint Session of the A. I. T. U. Congress and N. T. U. Federation was held in Nagpur to implement the terms of agreement between the organisations. Thus, the two wings of the Indian Trade Union Movement, which had drifted apart in 1929 in Nagpur, united together in the same place after nine years under the banner of one Central Organisation. The reason for this trade union unity was the realisation of the defects of the divided labour movement especially in time of depression and also the formation of the Congress Ministries in Provinces, which awakened new aspirations. The unity was complete in 1940 when the N. T. U. Federation which was affiliated as unit to the T. U. Congress was dissolved and merged into the latter body.

The various splits and unions from 1929 can well be illustrated in the following diagram :—

All-India Trade Union Congress
1920—29



i. Great War and After (1939-46)

The unity of T. U. Congress and N. T. U. Federation brought together in one organisation trade unionists of diverse political opinion. However, with the progress of war, it became impossible for those elements with different political aspects to pull on together with the result that a number of trade unionists, who advocated unconditional support to war effort and who were dissatisfied with the neutral attitude of the T. U. Congress left the organisation to start another one. Thus another split occurred in 1941 as a result of a resolution of the Anti-Fascist All-India Labour Congress held at Lahore. The T. U. Congress was condemned as incapable of safeguarding and advancing even the elementary economic interests of the Indian workers during the war period. A big group of trade unionists led by the members of the Radical Democratic Party was of the opinion that the A. I. T. U. C. should support and participate in the anti-fascist war irrespective of the acts of omission and commission of the British Government. An equally large number of trade unionists were opposed to that view on the ground that it was an imperialist war of Great Britain with which India had no concern. That was also the view of all the nationalists. Hence the Radicals left the A. I. T. U. Congress and started a new

organisation, Indian Federation of Labour in 1941. It immediately grew into a big organization. About 182 trade unions with a membership of 2,88,676 joined the Federation immediately when it was started. A special enquiry conducted by the Government in 1945 for the purpose of nominating Indian workers, representative to the I. L. O. Conference, however, established that the A. I. T. U. Congress was a more representative congress with 336 unions with a membership of 96,555 as against the I. F. Labour's 134 unions with 313,807 members.

Indian Trade Unions After Independence (1947-up to date)

After the 1942 movement, Congress leaders were all arrested and the A. I. T. U. C. passed mostly into the hands of communists again. After the transfer of power in 1947, under the influence of top Congress leaders the Indian National Trade Union Congress was formed with blessing of the late Sardar Patel. In the beginning it had a membership of 35 unions with 157,000 workers as members. The establishment of Indian National Trade Union Congress marks a new line of approach in the attitude of the I. N. Congress towards the labour problems. Pt. Hariharnath Shastri, its president, in a statement to the Associated Press of India on May 14 1948 said, "While the goal of a communist trade union congress was a totalitarian regime based on violence, the I. N. T. U. C. believed in the peaceful evolution of a socialist democracy which would be achieved only by following the ideals of Mahatma Gandhi". This new organisation's objects are to eliminate progressively social and political and economic exploitation of the workers and to remove inequality, the profit-motive, and the anti-social concentration of power in any form; to place industry under state ownership and control; to achieve self-government in industries; to ensure full employment and finally to promote the civic and political interests of the workers. The Congress Committee at its three-day session in New Delhi at the end of January 1948 passed a resolution urging the maintenance of peaceful industrial relations. This resolution made clear the intention of the Congress to gain full control over the labour movement. Therefore Congressmen were bluntly told that they should not join any other labour organisation and should actively support the I. N. T. U. C., but the instances have, however, come to light in which Congressmen have identified themselves with other parallel organisations and thus have come into direct conflict with the I. N. T. U. C. in contravention of the Congress policy.

The textile labour organisation of Ahmedabad with a membership of about 45,000 which was established in 1920 under the direct inspiration of Mahatma Gandhi joined the I. N. T. U. C. in the very month of its formation. Mr. Khandubhai Desai observed of this newly formed congress that "the new organisation

is neither a challenge nor a rival to any organisation that may now be working. It is conceived only as an instrument for a new and positive approach to the problems of labour organisation that experience over a period of years has taught. The existing Trade Union Congress has failed to deliver the goods on behalf of the mute and unorganised working class. The I. N. T. U. C. is an attempt of the working class, with a new and fresh approach to the solution of their problems and it is for the working class to decide whether to accept its lead or not. The sponsors of I. N. T. U. C. are no strangers to the trade union movement, and because of their nature and experiences they are confident of an enthusiastic response to their call from the working class.

"I. N. T. U. C. has before it a heavy programme of action but will have in its task the willing co-operation of the working class. It is the duty of the new organisation to guide the consciousness of the workers into desirable channels so as to secure the maximum benefit to labour and the nation as well."

Sardar Patel while addressing a labour rally at Kamgar Maidan, Bombay on 20th January 1948 also urged the workers to join this organisation and to promote the healthy growth of the labour movement. "The starvation of Indian industrial labour" he said, "lay in repudiating the lead of the leftist element that had been exploiting for their own political purposes". The I. N. T. U. C. should, on its part, concentrate on expounding its policy personally to every worker. This was not an arm-chair affair. It called for a great effort. As this split was not enough the Socialist party, after its secession from Congress started its own Trade Union Organisation called *Hindustan Mazdoor Panchayat*. The Royist Party withdrew from active political activity and the All India Federation of Labour ceased to exist. In December, 1948, a new all-India organisation called the *Hind Mazdoor Sabha* was formed in which *Hindustan Mazdoor Panchayat* and the Indian Federation of Labour were merged. The *Hind Mazdoor Sabha* is committed to the promotion of its aims and objects through the employment to all legitimate peaceful and democratic methods. At the time of its establishment the H. M. S. claimed 606,472 members from 427 unions. Almost all organised government workers like transport and posts and telegraphs and teachers are associated with the Hind Mazdoor Sabhas. Some seceders from All India Trade Union Conference under the leadership of Prof. K. T. Shah sponsored a fourth All-India Labour organisation—the United Trade Union Congress—since April 1949. Its formal aim is to establish a pure trade union movement as free as possible from any of the existing parties. But in fact it is something otherwise. In the words of its Secretary, Shri M. K. Bose, "The United Trade Union Congress though it does not belong to the communist party, is more or less leftist in political views and ready to co-operate with the commu-

nists." It favours Government intervention to force employers to recognise the Trade Unions and to obtain employers' compliance with agreements reached through negotiations. These four All-India Organisations claimed the following strength in 1952 and 1953.¹

Name	No of unions affiliated		Membership	
	1952	1953	1952	1953
1. Indian National Trade Union Congress	913	587	12,68,606	9,19,258
2. All-India Trade Union Congress	736	334	7,58,314	2,10,914
3. Hind Mazdoor Sabha	574	220	8,04,494	3,73,459
4. United Trades Union Congress	332	154	2,23,292	1,29,242
	2,424	1,295	30,54,706	16,32,873

Out of the above four the Indian National Trade Union Congress has been accepted by Government as the most representative organisation of Indian workers. By the middle of 1954 it claimed an affiliation of 1,232 unions with 15,48,568 members. Amongst the Railway workers also dissension developed and over and above the All-India Railwaymen's Federation in 1950, another organisation known as the Indian National Railwaymen's Federation was brought into existence by the Indian National Trade Union Congress. Thus, the labour movement of India developed a multiplicity of trade unions each owing allegiance to different political parties. The growth of the number of registered unions from time to time after passing of the Trade Unions Act 1926 is clear from the following table :—

	No. of regis- tered uni- ons	No. of Uni- ons submit- ting returns	Total member- ship of unions	Average membership per union
1927-28	29	28	100,619	3,594
1929-30	104	...	242,355	...
1933-35	213	...	284,918	...
1939-40	667	450	511,138	1136
1944-45	865	573	889,388	1552
1949-50	3,523	1919	1688,887	949
1950-51	3,987	2227	1883,860	846
1951-52	4,623	2556	1996,311	781
1952-53	4,909	2,718	2064,923	768
1953-54	,034	3,390	2,113,904	...

Note. Figures upto 1945 are for undivided India. Later figures relate to Indian Union.

¹ India, *A Reference Annual*, 1955. and 1956, p. 332.

The following table gives the number of registered trade unions and their membership in important States.¹ :—

	1934-39			1950-51			1954-3		
	A	B	C	A	B	C	A	B	C
Assam	3	N A	N A	60	35	112,736	102	79	149,793
Bihar	18	10	23,992	454	215	164,007	435	338	263,539
Bombay	52	40	50,997	597	370	352,191	765	461	401,594
Madhya Pradesh	35	30	13,377	98	60	30,332	144	65	33,133
Madras	87	66	49,376	749	264	138,507	531	328	138,998
Orissa	N A	N A	N A	44	25	16,097	81	62	31,037
Punjab	55	22	14,878	54	54	10,314	198	86	17,424
West Bengal	191	130	95,938	927	452	339,488	1,436	680	400,814
U. P.	35	23	11,759	537	368	170,584	620	416	143,496
Rajasthan	N.A	N.A	N A	26	23	17,529	85	36	7,888
Total India	476	321	270,317	3,987	2,227	1,874,860	...	...	...

A = No. of Union on Register.

B = No. of Unions submitting Returns

C = No. of members of Union submitting Returns.

Industrial Classification

Despite the importance of few national federations, horizontal organisations of trade unions in India has not been successful. Attempts to establish national federations have been made since 1921 but at present Indian Labour claims industrial federations of national importance mostly in textile, railways, engineering, coal and maritime services. Occupation-wise the largest trade union memberships is to be found in railways and other transport. Textiles lead in the number of trade unions followed by the engineering group. Industry-wise the maximum hold of AITUC is on the railways and textiles while that of Hind Mazdoor Sabha on other transports, collieries, municipalities and textiles. The INTUC predominates in railways, textiles, engineering, collieries, plantations, and trade and commerce. Below is given the industry-wise distribution of trade union membership as on March 31, 1953 :²—

Industry	INTUC	HMS	AITUC	UTUC	TOTAL
Railways	131,269	49,444	14,662	22,727	218,132
Transport	81,768	131,616	34,159	90,784	338,237
Jute Textiles	120,305	12,828	44,530	70,973	810,515
Non-Jute Textiles	302,174	118,818	140,887		
Ports & Docks	20,325	34,159	3,382	26,415	84,281
Mining and Quarrying	126,456	122,567	52,635	36,921	338,579
Engineering	47,225	21,982	28,753	23,239	121,199

¹ Indian Labour Gazette, March 1957, pp. 761-765.

² A. I. C. G. Economic Review, June 1954

Industry	INTUC	HMS	AITUC	UTUC	TOTAL
Iron and Steel	22,544	24,718	9,789	...	57,051
Chemicals & Oils	19,216	21,672	17,398	...	58,286
Leather Tanning and Rubber	24,654	2,861	9,954	...	37,469
Sugar, Food and Tobacco	72,337	65,662	68,721	27,276	233,696
Printing Press and paper	14,106	20,911	13,021	13,854	61,892
Agirculture, Plantation and forests	168,605	22,951	20,920	38,751	251,227
Public Employees	64,892	84,943	53,108	19,078	222,021
Commercial establishments	25,227	18,632	15,599	13,624	73,092
Glass and potteries	24,997	...	6,946	...	38,229
Power and Elec. Supply	13,232	...	6,627	...	13,578
Total	1279,252	753,464	541,091	383,672	29,57,479

Regional Distribution of Membership of Trade Unions

The distribution of the membership of the unions affiliated to these four All-India organisations as on 31st March, 1953 for certain important States are given in the table given below.¹

States	INTUC	HMS	AITUC	UTUC	Total
West Bengal	403,915	94,360	16,229	161,032	821,536
Bihar	148,613	141,335	53,236	43,725	386,909
Bombay	309,370	165,185	198,679	7,171	600,405
Delhi	11,375	13,592	16,117	16,478	57,562
U. P.	138,081	44,126	63,233	26,788	272,228
Hyderabad	11,134	28,705	30,346	21,816	92,001
Andhra	14,173	8,470	52,859	...	75,502
Madras excluding Kerala	79,863	151,680	12,415	13,4423	378,381
Mysore	13,028	13,144	29,960	...	56,132
M. P.	38,903	47,462	12,146	873	99,385
East Punjab	5,444	7,966	14,167	815	24,392
Orissa	13,460	9,447	13,711	...	36,618
Assam	86,185	22,837	4,202	34,880	148,104
Kerala including T. C.	36,616	3,637	66,043	67,186	173,482
Madhya Bharat	26,426	2,978	23,238	...	52,642
Total	1336,586	754,925	672,581	515,187	3279,279

Note. Difference between the total figures of this table and that of Distribution industry-wise is due to the differences in the selection of industries and States.

¹ A. I. C. C. *Economic Review*, June 1954.

It will be observed from the above table that Statewise, the INTUC has maximum hold in Bombay and West Bengal, next to them being in Bihar and U. P. The AITUC has maximum hold in Bengal, next in importance are U. P., Bihar and Andhra. For the Hind Mazdoor Sabha, the maximum number is from Bombay, next in importance being Madras, Bihar and West Bengal. The UTUC has its hold mainly in Madras and West Bengal.

Regional distribution of Trade Unions is influenced by the industrial localisation. In India industrial activity is concentrated in few regions. Hence, trade unions have invariably developed in those regions. Such regions are West Bengal, Bombay, Madras, U. P. and Bihar. The first four industrial regions are in themselves responsible for 80 % of the State Unions submitting returns and 77 per cent of their membership. The average membership is highest in the Assam and lowest in the Punjab.

Size of Trade Union

Out of the total industrial labour force, only 50 per cent is united, the rest remaining outside. This is mostly due to two facts: (i) migratory character of our labour force and (ii) inner split at higher level which leaves the workers perplexed or disgusted. This is all reflected in the size of the unions. Frequency distribution by membership of registered trade unions submitting returns for 1950-51 and 1952-53 according to membership is given below:¹

Membership	No. of Unions		No. of Members		Percentage to Total Membership	
	1950-51	1952-53	1951-52	1952-53	1951-52	1952-53
Below 50	303	486	9,474	15,383	0.5	0.8
50 to 299	951	1,267	1,35,623	1,79,253	7.8	8.5
300 to 999	462	597	2,60,988	3,36,882	14.8	16.3
1,000 to 4,999	222	273	4,11,661	5,07,754	23.5	24.6
5,000 to 19,999	47	53	4,22,415	4,66,055	24.0	22.5
20,000 and over	17	17	5,16,810	5,62,605	29.4	27.3
	2,002	2,693	17,65,971	2,06,4,932	100.0	100.0

Out of 2,693 unions submitting returns, as many as 2,250 were in the group where membership was below 1000. They represent only 24.6 per cent of the total labour force. On the other hand, remaining 443 unions represent 74 per cent of the total labour force. This shows that small-sized unions predominate in this country, which is not a very healthy sign. As Mr. Herbert Bullock, President of the British Trade Union Council, observed, "India has too many unions but not enough unity and a great future for Indian Trade Unionism can be visualised provided there is unity and goodwill among all".

¹ *Indian Labour Year Book*, 1953-54, p. 153.

Trade Union Finances and Activities

As provided in the Trade Unions Act every union either of workers or of employers has to submit returns of their funds and the figures of income and expenditure, throwing light on the nature of its activities. We are concerned here with the workers, unions. In 1927-28 when returns were submitted for the first time, a number of 8 registered trade unions submitting returns had an income of Rs. 1,63,581, the average income per union being Rs. 5,842/- per annum and income per member being Rs. 1-10-1 per annum. Since then the number of unions submitting returns has increased to 1976 with a total income of Rs. 44,56,139.¹ But owing to the enormous increase in the number of small unions the income per union per annum has declined to about Rs. 2,255/. And although income per member per annum shows an increase of Rs. 2-8-4, if account is taken of the rise in the index number of prices since 1927-28 the figure will work out to be considerably less than what it was at that date. Below is given income and expenditure chart which will show that the major source of income was contribution from members and the most important item of expenditure of the trade unions was establishment, and salaries, allowances, etc. of officers come next.²

Percentage Distribution of Income and Expenditure according to Items :—

<i>Sources of income</i>	<i>State Unions</i>	<i>Central Unions</i>	<i>Items of Expenditure</i>	<i>State Unions</i>	<i>Central Unions</i>
Contribution from members	78·3	87·1	Establishment, Salaries, allowances etc. of officials	23·5	39·5
Donations	14·0	7·3	Trade disputes	16·5	17·5
Sale of Periodicals, etc.	0·2	2·2	Funeral, old age, sickness, unemployment and other benefits	5·8	2·0
Interest on investment	0·4	0·1	Educational, social- and religious benefits	1·5	0·6
Misc.	7·0	3·3	Publication of periodicals, others	2·5	0·3
				9·9	1·3
				40·3	38·8

Includes particulars relating to 22 central unions in West Bengal.
Particulars relating to 22 central unions in West Bengal not available.

¹ India, A Reference Annual, 1953.

² Indian Labour Year Book, 1951-52, p. 157, *Ibid*, for 1952-54 (1955), p. 154

Difficulties of the Trade Unions

A trade union in India has to face various difficulties of organisation of a large number of people who are most illiterate with special characteristics of their own. Some like the colliery labourers are not concentrated in a single space, others like the plantation labourers are closely guarded by their employees, while still others like the Jetty or Dock workers are nomadic in character.

The difficulty that the trade unionist has to face in India are both internal and external. According to Whitley Commission they are internal rather than external because what is essentially wanting in India is the spirit of association among our working classes, not merely for collective bargaining, but for mutual benefit, co-operative efforts for education, economic improvement and similar constructive labour schemes. What Thomas Show (the eminent Labour M. P.) said in 1926 still holds true : "There is no royal road to success in a labour movement. There is only one road narrow, stony and thorny and that is the road to endeavour of sacrifice, of hard work, of fighting for an ideal, whatever the consequences may be." The task of an Indian trade unionist has been never smooth. The history of labour in other countries is a painful reminder of this fact. Labour cannot succeed unless and until it can present a united front, standing four square to all the winds that may blow. "The story of Indian Labour Movement like that of Japan, England and U. S. A. is a story of success and failure, progress and retrogression, hopes and disillusionment." That is the history of a long and bitter struggle between capital and a struggle against oppressive penal laws, for the right of association of collective bargaining and for the recognition of trade unions.

Causes of the Slow Growth of Trade Unionism in India

Although trade unions have a vast field of useful and glorious work before them for the uplift of the millions of poor labourers, groaning under the burden of capitalism, yet the movement has not been able to attain the required magnitude and solidarity. In no country in the world as in India is the trade union more needful to fight only the battle of the poor and the submerged, who have not been exposed and are still exposed to the merciless exploitation of the capitalists, alien and indigenous, but have been taxed outrageously on their scanty produce and the bare necessities of life. Nearly the whole mass of industrial labour is illiterate, the results of which manifest themselves in wages, in health, in productivity, and in organisation. Illiteracy gives room for victimisation, intimidation, harassment and ill-treatment. Workers are marked for special treatment for their being members of the union;

they are refused re-employment owing to their having taken part in the last strike and in the organisation of the union ; workers are dismissed under one pretext or another, gratuity is refused to workers on the ground that their applications came through the Union. When we enquire into the reasons of the weakness of trade unions in India, there are certain obvious factors which have to be taken into account and they are detailed below:—

(1) One serious obstacle to the development of the trade union movement is the migratory character of Indian labour. "Those who are frequently leaving an industrial centre, even for short spells, and are frequently changing their employer, are less inclined than more permanent workers to maintain a constant interest in any organisation." Thus their migratory character, combined with their desire to escape from the taxing industrial work and to settle down in their villages as soon as possible, reduce their interest in the attempts of the union to improve their conditions of life and work in the industrial centres and increase their willingness to put up with disabilities. The industrial workers in India are chiefly drawn from rural areas, and hence, it is still primarily agricultural in character. The majority of our workers still remain an inarticulate, incoherent and floating mass and have not yet become self-conscious, independent permanent class with a well-organised status and with distinct rights and privileges and with developed sense of duty and obligation in modern industrial society.

(2) The lack of education is the greatest obstacle which prevents the workers from taking long view. It is difficult to induce them to spend money by way of subscription to trade unions, because such expenditures do not yield any clear and quick return. In return for small amounts which they subscribe to the trade unions funds, they expect far too much from the union. They think that membership of a union is an insurance against any action by the employer. Corporative saving for future benefits makes no appeal to them

(3) Even if any of them appreciates the importance of subscription to unions, their low wages and indebtedness make even small subscription a substantial burden to them so that unions generally find it difficult to secure sufficient funds without outside help. One of the main reasons of the attitude of our workers either to remain aloof from the unionism or to fail to pay subscriptions for months together is their poverty. An industrial worker whose wages and leisure are barely adequate for sustained work in the factory is not likely to find time or energy for any outside work.

(4) Our labourers are divided by race, religion, language and caste and as the Labour Commission observes, "Differences of

1 *Royal Commission on Agriculture Report*, p. 321.

languages and race are separating factors which make it difficult for the workers to combine".

(5) While the employers are highly organised into associations of large economic and political power, the transition from personal loyalty to their master, to group loyalty to their fellows is difficult for Indian workers and the peasants, who have left their village community and find it difficult to accept a trade union as a substitute. Moreover, their creed is apt to inculcate in them the wisdom of accepting their existing position and disabilities.

(6) Jobbers, sardars, mistris and other overseers are deeply hostile to unionism, because they are afraid that it would gradually destroy their power over the workers.

(7) While spurious labour leaders find it easy to obtain a following by giving spacious promises of immediate benefits, genuine leaders find it difficult to keep their hold upon their followers and to train them in the principles and methods of unionism.

(8) The low subscription makes it impossible for an adequate staff to be maintained. The workers do not see why the clerical staff of their union should be paid a higher scale than they receive, but the quality of the work turned out by men on Rs. 20/- or Rs. 25/- a month is extremely poor. Organisers of unions and those who respond to calls for help from strikers, cannot hope for even their actual expenses to be met out of the workers' meagre funds. The task becomes intolerably irksome and heavy after a few years unless those who undertake it have means of their own and can be independent of the unions.

(9) Some of the workers discouraged and depressed by bad conditions cherish communist ideals and employers are not prepared to deal with their unions. It is demanding too much of human nature to expect that a mill manager in India or the head of a factory would tolerate for long one of his own workers being the secretary or some other responsible official in a trade union, listen to his representations, conduct negotiations with him, not only in normal times but also during strikes or lockouts. One of the two things are bound to happen under such circumstances sooner or later; if the worker be a conscientious and able individual, he finds himself discharged, for indolence, insubordination, inefficiency or some other alleged causes. If, however, he is accommodating by temperament he gradually loses the confidence of his fellow-workers and resigns his position in the union to improve his prospects inside the factory. Both these experiments are common in trade unions in practically every part of India.

(10) Often an India trade union is a house divided in itself. Two distinct groups of persons, members of the same

union but holding diametrically opposite views, claim to be the real representatives of the union. Some of the foremost unions have experienced this ugly feature with the result of the formation of too weak unions or of lack of organisation among the persons once organised.

Suggestions

The Labour Commission expressed its conviction that "nothing but a strong trade union movement will give the Indian workmen adequate protection. There are strict limitations to the power of Government and public to protect workmen who are unable to protect themselves. Labour laws, indeed find one of their most effective sanctions in the support of organised unions." "It is in the power to combine that labour has the only effective safeguard against exploitation and the only lasting security against inhuman conditions."¹

Private employers have tended to recognise unions subject to rules made by themselves. Many employers have often refused recognition to many unions on the ground that their members have been only a minority of the class of workers concerned or that another unions have already been in existence or that they have included outsiders in their executive or that they have declined to dismiss certain office bearers or that they have not registered themselves under the Trade Union Act. The Commission observed in this connection that "neither the minority character of a union, nor the prior existence of another union is a good reason for refusing recognition." The endeavour to dictate to unions on the subject of their officers or leaders is equally short-sighted and unwise. There can be no doubt that under the conditions of factory labour in India one of the weaknesses of the unions is the difficulty of finding leaders within the ranks of labour. It is still dependent on outside leadership. Most of the leaders are professional men, lawyers and social workers and are, therefore, lacking in the technical knowledge and that sympathetic insight into the problems of workers which a leader belonging to the rank and file of the labour is expected to possess. Hence, if trade unionism is to grow in India for some time to come the leaders have to be found amongst outsiders. As the Labour Commission observed the claim to be allowed to deal only with one's own men, is frequently little more than an endeavour to secure that the case of the men shall be presented by persons who are not likely to prove assertive. In every country much of the active work of the trade unions, particularly in their relations with employers, is carried on by persons whose livelihood does not depend on the employers' will.

Trade Unionism has unfortunately not been conducted along wholesome channels in India. As already pointed out, the labour

¹ *Ibid*, p 322.

leaders are mostly outsiders, professional and public men, political and social workers. These people with a few exceptions have little knowledge of the highly complicated technicalities of industries. Naturally they have little genuine sympathy and understanding of the aspirations of the industrial workers. The movement can only gain real strength from within. It must be led by workers themselves, with a few full-time salaried officials of proved integrity who are animated solely by the idea of social service at the helm of affairs. There should be a technical adviser attached to the trade unions in each industrial centre. Dr. Mukerjee rightly observes, "Like the cognate field of the co-operative movement in the Indian villages, the labour movement in our cities and towns calls for a devoted band of intellectuals who will have to live unknown among the working folk for a long time to organise them and to train them for constructive trade union work. Correct leadership is essential by a leadership which is not prepared to sacrifice the interest of the workers to imported doctrinaire enthusiasm, but desires to back a highway for them to attain their stature as key participants in a new order of things."

One part of the trade union movement today has become so obsessed by dangerous half-truths about the workers, problems that it has lost sight of moral necessity for devoting itself heart and soul to the task of labour welfare. It will be right to emphasise here the fundamental truth that work is not in itself a debasing drudgery; it is a healthy function of the human being that normal trade unionists must be made to understand the dignity of labour. They will have to substitute working for a factory. They must learn that one cannot bring a new social order into being by forming class hatred and class strife or by inciting the 'have-nots' to battle against 'the haves'. It is not by abusing the head workers that one can usher in a new social order. Labour must work shoulder to shoulder with management in the faith that the larger interests of the two seemingly diametrically opposite parties are in fact identical and that the only way to promote those interests is along the road of co-operation. It should be clearly borne in mind that industry is capable of yielding major benefits to both parties only if each recognises other's rights while at the same time accepting its own responsibilities.

Simultaneously the trade unions should take steps to organise labour to safeguard and promote its interests. They should impress upon the society to recognise the fundamental rights of the workers in absence of which full co-operation would not be forthcoming. A living wage, provision of sickness, old age and unemployment insurance, safeguarding of his civic and political rights and his full participation in the task of forging a new social and economic order of the society are the essential conditions which the community should ensure to the workers.

At the same time it is desirable to make it compulsory for the workers to join trade unions and to assume definite responsibilities in respect of the mobilisation of man power under proper government control. Employers must understand that the workers should be helped in every possible way to organise themselves, allow to put their grievances and express their demands through trade unions free from any intimidation or discrimination. At the same time, the management also will have to provide much more fully for the special training of the members. The details of such reorganisation will vary greatly from industry to industry but the fundamental principles are the same everywhere.

It is necessary not only for the workers but also for the state employers and the public in general to have a clear conception of the purposes of trade unionism of its functions and of its place in the industrial picture. One must consider not only the present functions of the labour unions, but also their potential ones, and the new and ever-widening opportunities that may be open to them in the future industrial set-up in free India.

In these momentous days of industrial promise, with the State playing an increasing active role, the reorganisation of trade unions on sound lines is the crying need of the hour. Not only will trade unions have to shoulder greater responsibilities but they will also find that in an increasing degree the solution of their problems brings them face to face with national and international issues of great complexity. They should prove training grounds for co-operation in wider fields, breeding ground not for suspicion and hostility, but for proper mutual understanding. All this will promote the happiness of the Indian industrial workers who are rapidly learning to abandon their philosophy of *Karma* and fatalism that that doctrine engenders.

The Indian Trade Unions Act, 1926

The Act was passed in March 1926 and was put into force on 1st June 1927. Although two amending Acts were passed in 1928 and 1942, no major change was introduced in the Act till 1947. In 1947 an amending Act, was passed which provided for compulsory recognition of representative unions by the employers and listed certain practices as unfair practices on the part of employers and certain others as unfair practices on the part of the recognised unions. The main provisions of this amending Act have, however, not been put into force. The main provisions of the Act as amended are as follows :

Registration

Any seven or more members of a trade union can apply to the Registrar appointed under the Act for registration of the union and can be granted a certificate of registration

provided that they satisfy the requirements in regard to the rules as laid down in section 6 of the Act. At least half the total number of the office bearers of a registered union must be persons actually engaged in the industry to which the union belongs. Under certain circumstances the Registrar of trade unions is authorised to withdraw or cancel the registration. The Act, however, contains provisions for appeal against the Registrar's decisions.

Rights and Privileges of a Registered Trade Union

The officers and members of a registered trade union are given protection against criminal proceedings in respect of any agreement for the purpose of furtherance of any legal object of the union. They are also protected from civil suits in respect of any act done in contemplation or furtherance of a trade dispute, if the plea is only that such act induces some other persons to break a contract of employment or that is an interference with the trade, business and employment of some other persons.

Obligations and Liabilities of Registered Trade Unions

The general fund of a registered trade union can do utilized only for the purposes specified in section 15 of the Act. However, for the promotion of civil and political interests of its members, the unions are authorised to constitute a separate political fund. Registered unions are required to submit annual returns in the prescribed forms to the Registrar with a duly audited statement of receipts and expenditure during the year. They are also required to keep account book open for inspection by an officer or member of the union. Any changes in the name, constitution and rules of the union as well as changes of office bearers have to be notified to the Registrar.

Recognition of Trade Unions

The Act authorises the Central Government in the case of central undertakings, major ports, mines and oil-fields and State Governments in other cases to appoint Labour Courts to hear and decide disputes arising out of refusal of employers to recognise any particular union.

No union is entitled to recognition by an order of the Labour Court unless (1) it is registered under the Act; (2) all its ordinary members are workmen employed in the same industry or in industries closely allied to or connected with one another; (3) it is representative of all the workmen employed by the employer in that industry or those industries; (4) its rules do not provide for the exclusion from membership of any class of workmen employed by the employer in that industry or those industries; (5) its rules provide for the procedure for declaring a strike; and (6) its rules provide that a meeting of its executive shall be held at least once in every six months.

Where a union has been recognised by an employer under orders of Labour Court, the employer or the Registrar can apply

to the Court for the withdrawal of recognition on the grounds (1) that the executive or member of the union have committed any unfair practice, or (2) that the union have ceased to be representative of the workers, or (3) that the union has failed to submit returns required under the Act. The Act provides that after hearing the union, if the Court is satisfied that the union is no longer fit to be recognised, it may withdraw the recognition.

The executive or a recognised union is entitled to negotiate with the employer in respect of matters connected with the employment or non-employment or terms of employment or the conditions of labour of all or any of its members and to display notices of the union in any premises where its members are employed.

Unfair Practices

Under the Act the following have been declared to be unfair practices on the part of a recognised union : (1) for a majority of members to take part in an irregular strike ; (2) for the executive of the union to advise, support or instigate an irregular strike ; and (3) for an officer of a union to submit returns containing false statements. It is deemed to be an unfair practice on the part of the employer ; (1) to interfere in any way with the rights of his workmen to organise a trade union or to engage in concerted activities for the purpose of mutual aid or protection ; (2) to interfere with the formation or administration of any trade union or to contribute financial or other support to it ; (3) to discharge or otherwise discriminate against (a) any officer of a recognised trade union because of his being such an officer ; (b) any workman because he has made allegations or given evidence in any enquiry or proceeding under the Act ; and (4) to refuse to negotiate with the recognised union or to deny privileges granted by the Act to the recognised union. Any employer who commits any unfair practice can be punished with a fine which may extend to one thousand rupees. For recognised unions committing unfair practices the penalty prescribed is the withdrawal of recognition.

Administration

The Act applies to the whole of India except the State of Jammu and Kashmir. The Government of Jammu and Kashmir passed a separate Act on the subject in April 1950. This Act closely follows the Central Act.

The Indian Union Act is administered by the State Governments who are required to appoint Registrar of Trade Union. In order to check the growth of unhealthy unions and to promote their development on healthy lines, the Government proposes to revise and consolidate the existing Act. A Bill for the purpose was introduced in Parliament in February 1950, however, as a result of the dissolution of Parliament this Bill lapsed. The question of introducing a fresh Bill in Parliament is at present under the consideration of Government.

CHAPTER X_{IV}

INDUSTRIAL UNREST

Industrial strifes, strikes and lock-outs are a common feature of the modern industrial system. Strikes¹ are staged by workers as a means of concerted action for bringing about higher wages and bonus, better condition, of work and employment, leave and provident fund benefits and provisions for welfare facilities. Strikes are also organised to protect against retrenchment or dismissal of workers, wage cuts, 'Scientific management,' 'Rationalisation' and such other changes or maltreatment by the employers. The employers, on the other hand, take advantage of their own financial power to cow down the workers. They simply lock their factories so that the workers finding themselves out of employment, may be forced to accept the terms dictated by the employers with regard to wages, bonus, conditions of work and the like; lock-outs are many a time resorted to as a defensive measure, say to prevent the mishandling of machines on the part of the discontented workers.¹

'Strike' is considered to be the most effective weapon in the armoury of organised labour to bring down a recalcitrant employer, and 'lockout' is a weapon of employers to disrupt, demoralise and disband the united front of the working class.² According to Patterson, "Strikes constitute militant and organised protests against existing industrial conditions. They are symptoms of industrial unrest in the same way that boils are symptoms of a disordered system."³

Brief History of Industrial Disputes in India

(i) *Industrial Disputes upto 1920.* Isolated disputes took place in India as early as the eighties of the last century, but there is hardly any record of them, but it was not until 1918 that they became a serious feature of the Indian Industrial System. Before the war, however, on the whole strikes were infrequent, as the

- 1 Dr. Srivastava says, "When human rights are tried to be enforced, the workers declare cessation of work and refuse to be exploited. This is called 'Strike'."
- 2 While according to him when employers want to dominate over the human rights of the workers and impose their property rights upon them, they turn them out of their business premises and prevent them from doing work. This is called 'Lockout' Vide, K. N. Srivastava, *Industrial Peace and Labour in India* 1954, p. 74.
- 3 *Ibid.*, p. 74.
- 4 Patterson ; *Social Aspects of Industry*, p. 388.

workers lacked organisation and leaders had an entirely passive outlook on life and regarded a return to their village homes as the only solace for the hardship of the industrial work. Since the war, and especially since the end of it, the relations between workers and their employers became much more strained, and disputes between them became much more common, owing to growth of trade unionism, the rise of labour leaders, the awakening among the masses caused by the war and the nationalist movement. During the war a considerable portion of strikes proved successful, because the employers, eager to make the most of the opportunities that then existed for earning large profits dreaded any prospects of a stoppage of work and so were often willing to give in to the demands of their workers. But when the trade boom came to an end and large profits disappeared and a period of economic depression set in, the employers began to resist the demands, so that nearly $\frac{2}{3}$ of the strikes occurring since then have failed. There were some important strikes in the cold weather of 1918-19. They were more numerous in the following winter and in the winter of 1920-21; they became almost general in organised industry.¹ In 1919 sixteen strikes were recorded in Madras, eight in Bengal, Bihar, Orissa and Assam, and a general strike in Bombay. There were two general strikes in Bombay in 1918-19 and 1920 involving about 150,000 workers; in Ahmedabad in 1921 and 1922 involving 30,000 and 33,000 persons. In 1920, nearly 200 strikes took place all over the country.² During 1920 and 1921 there were strikes among Cotton Mill workers, tramway workers and railway shop workers at Sholapur, lasting from a fortnight to five months. "The main cause was the realisation of the potentialities of strike in the existing situation, and this was assisted by the emergence of trade union organisers, by the education which the war had given to the masses, and by a scarcity of labour arising from the expansion of industry, and aggravated by the great epidemics of influenza". Accurate data on the industrial disputes were not available till 1921, when the Labour Office was established by the Government of Bombay and the Government of India took measures to compile records of disputes, and now accurate data of industrial disputes are available. The Industrial Disputes Enquiry Committee appointed by the Government of Bombay mentioned in 1922 the following as the chief characteristics of Bombay strikes, and they continue to be the characteristics, in the main, of strikes in India. (1) The frequency of strikes without notice, (2) The lack of clearly defined grievances before resorting to strikes, (3) The multiplicity of demands brought forward after the commencement of strikes, (4) The lack of effective organisations to give shape to the demands of the workers and to secure their compliance with any settlement that may be arrived at.

¹ *Report of Royal Commission on Labour*, p. 33

² Ahmed, Mukhtar, *Trade Unionism and Trade Disputes in India*, p. 21.

at and (5) The growing cohesion among the employers and the workers, and the ability of the latter to continue strikes for prolonged periods in spite of any visible organisation. During 1921, there were 396 strikes all over India involving 6,00,000 workers and aggregate loss of nearly 7 million working days. Of the strikes, which have occurred since the post-war period, one of the most serious was in the cotton industry in Bombay City in 1924; it involved over 1,60,000 workers and caused a loss of 7.75 million working days. The immediate cause of the trouble was the decision of the Millowners' Association to withhold the annual bonus, which had been granted for 5 years, and had become the part of the wages.

In 1923 the cost of living fell and a period of efforts began by employers in more than one centre to reduce wages and to withdraw or curtail concessions like dear food allowance, etc. The workers put forward other difficulties, namely, exploitation by their immediate superiors through extortion, bribery and corruption, and defects, in working conditions. There were 213 strikes in all involving 3,00,000 workers and a loss of 5 million working days, Bombay contributing more disputes than all the other States taken together, with 109 disputes involving a loss of 3 million working days. The most serious strike was at Ahmedabad amongst the textile workers, affecting 56 out of 61 working mills; involving nearly 45,000 workers, and a loss in working days of nearly 2 and a half million. Though the workers were unable to prevent a wage cut, the compromise effected was to limit the reduction to $15\frac{1}{4}\%$, against the millowners' original proposal of 20%.

In 1925, industrial discontent manifested itself in renewed activity, especially among the textile workers of Bombay and Railway and Jute workers in Bengal. At this time a strike was also caused by the decision of Bombay Millowners' Association to reduce the dearness allowance by 20%. The millowners finally decided to restore the cut, but not before the strike which had caused a loss of about 11 million working days. Over 500 of these took place in the cotton textile industry and nearly 150 in the Jute industry. The year 1926 and 1927 were comparatively quiet, partly because of a slight revival in trade and partly also because of a realisation on the part of the workers that prolonged strikes were not always helpful to their interests. Thus between 1921 and 1926 there were over 1,100 strikes in India involving about 2 million workers and causing a loss of over 37 million working days. In 1928 there was a fresh wave of industrial unrest sweeping over the country. The total number of disputes was only 200, but the loss in working days reached the recorded figure of $31\frac{1}{2}$ million. The textile workers in Bombay, who had recovered their morale after 2 years of comparative rest, declared a general strike as a protest against the decision of the employers to introduce schemes of rationalization of work.

After 1928, there had been a decrease, both in number of disputes and of the working days lost, though there were in the following year 141 disputes involving a loss of 12 million working days. In 1929, a general strike in Bombay Textile Mills lasted 6 months. Another important strike during the year was in the Bengal Jute resulting in a loss of nearly 3 million working days. The cause of strike, which lasted for 11 weeks, was the decision of the employers to increase the working hours from 55 to 60 a week. Between 1921 to 1929, on an average, there were 195 strikes, involving 364,112 workers and a loss of 9,360,937 man-days.

(ii) Industrial Disputes during 1930-39

Between 1930 and 1936, the number remained fairly steady in the neighbourhood of 150 a year and the loss of working days ranged between 2 and $2\frac{1}{2}$ million; 1934, however, was an exceptional year, the number of working days lost being nearly 5 million.

The recrudescence of industrial unrest in 1937 may be explained by the advent in that year of the popular Governments in the Provinces. Large-scale strikes commenced to resist the wage cuts, to secure increment in wages and for the redress of grievances due to the intensification of work from the so-called rationalisation schemes introduced in industrial concerns. It is noteworthy that the chief centre of unrest was Bengal, where over 6 million working days were lost because of a prolonged strike of the Jute Mill Workers; Bombay was next, with a loss of nearly a million working days, closely followed by U. P. This fact is not entirely due to the more advanced degree of industrial development of these provinces but also to the predominance in these centres of the textile industry; for of the 379 strikes no less than 221 were in cotton textile and jute industries, the total number of days lost in disputes in these being about $6\frac{1}{2}$ million. The majority of the strikes were due to demands for an increase in wages for the restoration of cuts affected during the period of the depression. 46% of these resulted in some concession or benefits to the workers involved in these disputes. In 1938, the number rose to 399 mainly because of the disputes in the textile industry.

It is noteworthy that though the number of disputes during 1930-39 had increased to an average of 222 from 195 for the years 1921-29, the average for the number of workers involved and the loss of man-days was lower. In other words, it might be pointed out that the frequency of disputes had increased during 1930-39, the loss in the working days was less than 50% of that of 1921-29. Between 1930-39, on an average, there were 222 strikes, involving 265,427 workers and a loss of 4,004,209 man-days.

Kanpur remained the storm centre during 1937, 1938, and 1939 where besides strikes in individual mills, general strikes also

took place. Bengal, Bombay and M. P. were other States which were very much affected by the strike current.

(iii) Industrial Disputes during War and Post-War Period (1939-46)

With the commencement of World War II, prices began to soar high and the cost of living of the workers went on rising. This created restlessness and a demand for dearness allowance emerged all over the country. Later on, when the industrialists began to make huge profits, demand for participation in the war profits in the form of bonus commenced and led to labour strikes. In 1939, there were 406 stoppages affecting more than 4 lakh persons and responsible for the loss of nearly five million man-days. In 1940 the number of disputes were only 322, but the man-days lost were to the tune of 7.6 million. Thereafter till 1945 practically the number of strikes went on increasing but the duration of strikes went on declining, since provisions were made for the compulsory settlement of industrial disputes by means of adjudication. Total number of strikes during 1939-45 were nearly 4,000 involving 37 lakhs workers and man-days lost during this period was to the tune of 31.5 million.

Just after the war the years 1946 and 1947 were the most notorious years in the history of Industrial Disputes. The total number of disputes was 1629 in 1946 and 1811 in 1947 as compared to 820 in 1945. The number of workers involved also rose from 7,47,530 in 1945 to 1,261,948 in 1946 and 1,840,784 in 1947, and number of man-days lost increased from nearly 4 million in 1945 to 12.7 million in 1946 and 16.6 million in 1947. Amongst the industries affected, cotton, woollen and silk mills accounted for the greatest number of disputes, followed by the engineering works, jute mills, Railways and mines, etc.¹ So far as regional distribution of disputes is concerned, Bombay accounted for the highest number of disputes (542) followed by Bengal (369), Madhya Pradesh (137) and U. P. (108), etc.

Industrial Disputes in Post Independence Period (1947-uptodate)

Thus industrial unrest was at its peak during 1947. In 1947 alone 16.5 million man-days were lost with 1,811 disputes. The main causes for this labour unrest were :—

- (1) The over-zealous feelings of 'independence' in the minds of the workers as a sequel to the transfer of power from foreign hands to the National Government ;

¹ Out of the total number of disputes, 631 took place in cotton, woollen and silk industry, 95 in jute mills, 133 in engineering works, 72 in railways, 28 in mines and 670 in miscellaneous industries. *Vide Indian Labour Gazette*, July, 1947, p. 15.

- (ii) The tall promises made by the Indian National Congress, prior to the General Elections in 1945 to ameliorate the workers' lot. After the assumption of power by the Congress, the promises could not be fulfilled ;
- (iii) The continuous rise in the cost of living, even after the close of the war, and the wages were far behind the prices ;
- (iv) The growing communistic influence over the workers ;
- (v) The fear of retrenchment and consequent unemployment in the post-war period ;
- (vi) Misdirected labour leadership ; and
- (vii) The employers' apathy and the States' dilatoriness with regard to labour problems.

During 1947, the industries seriously affected were cotton, woollen and silk, engineering, railways and jute mills. During 1948, there were 1,259 disputes resulting in work stoppages and involving 1,059,120 workers and a loss at 7·8 million man-days.

But due to various Government measures the situation showed a gradual improvement during the next few years. The year 1949 was a year of intense labour unrest in Railways and Posts and Telegraphs arising from demands for an increase in D. A. but these strikes did not affect the country much. During 1949, there were 920 disputes which involved 6·8 lakh workers and resulted in a loss of 6·6 million man-days. In 1950, the number of disputes were much less being only 814 and the number of workers involved was 7 lakhs and man-days lost were 12·8 million much higher than that of 1949 which was only 66 00,595. This was due to the General Strike in Bombay textile mills, which started on August 14, 1950 and continued till October 16, 1950. This alone accounted for a loss of 94 lakh man-days. The main cause of this strike was the question of bonus for the year 1949. At last the strike was withdrawn by the strike leaders of the Socialist Party without any gain on the part of the workers. This general strike lasting for two months taught a lesson to the employers that the Indian working class can no longer tolerate the indifference towards its interest and for securing its dues it would not be frightened of any hardship.

The loss of 3,818,928 man-days recorded in 1951, was, however, the lowest during the post-war period and this marked improvement in the situation seems to have been maintained during 1952 and onwards. Of course there was a slight setback in labour-management relations during the year 1954-55, when the number of man-days lost through stoppages of work are taken into account.

The following table shows the number of disputes in India from 1921 :—

Year	No. of disputes	Workers involved (in thousands)	Working days lost (in millions)
1921	396	600	7.0
1926	128	187	1.1
1929	141	532	12.1
1931	166	203	2.4
1936	157	169	2.4
1949	406	409	4.9
1941	359	291	3.3
1946	1620	1961	12.7
1948	1259	1059	7.8
1950	814	720	12.8
1951	1071	664	3.6
1952	963	809	3.3
1953	772	467	3.4
1954	840	477	3.4
1955	1166	528	5.6
1956	1258	722	7.0
Jan. 1957	121	52	.28

Statistics for 1921 to 1946 relate to undivided India. Later figures relate to Indian Union).

Causes of the Disputes

The capitalistic industrialism by creating two classes of buyers and sellers of labour creates a number of labour problems, which promote dissatisfaction, distress and distrust among the wage earners. When people sell their services and spend their working lives on the premises of the purchaser of those services, a varying amount of dissatisfaction, discontent, and industrial unrest are bound to occur. Employers are specially interested in higher wages, healthy working conditions, opportunity to advance, satisfying work, some voice in industrial affairs and protection against loss of wages, overwork and arbitrary treatment. But when such things are denied to them, they are forced to exert their rights and stop working to make the employers understand their grievances and redress them. Often many causes blended together produce a strike.

Dealing with the causes of industrial disputes, the Royal Commission on Labour in India cited statistics to show that between 1921 and 1928—"In 976 disputes the principal demand related to the question of pay or house and in 425 to the question of personnel, i.e., the reinstatement or dismissal of one or more individuals. . . 74 strikes were primarily concerned with the questions of leave or hours of work and the remaining 382 could not be classified in respect of the demand made."

Similarly in the later periods the various causes which have given rise to strikes in India are summarised in the following table" :—

Year	No. of stoppages	Causes				
		Wages	Bonus	Personnel	Leave and hours	Others
1921	396	167	75	68	11	75
1926	128	60	4	31	11	22
1931	166	69	2	39	20	36
1933	146	95	2	19	5	25
1936	157	96	1	24	6	30
1939	406	232	2	74	12	86
1941	359	218	9	55	15	62
1943	716	342	55	53	14	252
1946	1629	604	79	280	130	534
1948	1959	383	112	363	110	279
1951	1071	301	70	301	84	270

The following table gives the total number of stoppages from 1921 to 1950 :—

Year	No. of stoppages	Causes				
		Wages	Bonus	Personnel	Leave and hours	Others
1921—29	1,755	791	141	405	68	350
1930—39	2,223	1,270	24	431	101	397
1940—50	10,980	3,910	823	1,847	622	2,694
Total	13,980	5,971	988	2,683	791	3,421
Percentage	100	42·7	7	19	5·3	24·4

It will be observed that out of the total number of strikes from 1921 to 1950 about 42·7 per cent were caused due to grievances connected with wages and about 7 per cent connected with bonus. This shows that the Indian working class has not been able to get a living wage and its fight is mainly confined to improve its earning position. Besides, personnel causes accounted for about 19 per cent leave hours and working conditions 5·3 per cent and others 24·4 per cent of all the strikes. All these show that there is lack of contact between the employers and employees and proper labour management is unknown. The 'others' group of causes include *hartals*, i.e., cessation of work due to political and other causes and sympathetic and general strikes. That show, that though strikes in the main are caused by economic discontents non-economic causes also account for a number of strikes.

The latest position is shown in the following table :—

Classification of Industrial Disputes by Causes 1955

Causes	No. of disputes	Percentage to total	
		1955	1954
Wages and allowances ...	276	23·7	28·6
Bonus ...	195	16·7	6·4
Personnel ...	367	31·5	35·2
Leave and hours of work...	58	5·0	9·5
Others ...	228	19·5	15·6
Not known ...	42	3·6	4·7
Total ...	1166	100·0	100·0

This table shows a distribution of the disputes according to causes. The disputes relating to grievances of 'personnel' were the largest in number followed by those relating to wages and allowances during both 1954 and 1955. Disputes due to *Bonus* accounted for an appreciably higher percentage of total number of disputes during 1955 as compared to the previous year, while the percentage of disputes accounted for by leave and hours of work showed a decline.

If we look to the industry-wise distribution of disputes resulting in work-stoppages, we find that most textile industry workers specially cotton, woollen, silk and jute workers are the sufferers and Railway, Engineering and others also suffered considerable loss. Figures given below show the position :—

Year	Total	Details by industries			
		Cotton	Jute	Railway	Engineering
1946	1629	631	95	72	133
1947	1811	672	68	53	208
1948	1259	420	46	N. K.	N. K.
1949	920	248	20	32	93
1950	814	265	27	25	70
1951	1071	283	18	26	73

The recent position is given below :—

Industry Disputes	No. of	No. of workers involved	Total No. of man-days lost during 1953	During December 1956
Agriculture and allied activities ..	217	94,357	611,812	1,089
(1) Plantations ..	217	94,357	611,812	1,089
(2) Others ..	...	...	...	N. K.
I. Mining and Quarrying ..	73	22,672	557,988	253,536
(1) Coal ..	50	14,481	191,394	..
(2) Others ..	23	8,191	366,594	..
II-III. Manufacturing ..	698	349,619	4,163,524	1,449
(1) Sugar Mills ..	9	5,384	22,401	...
(2) Hydrogenated Oil Industry ..	3	481	23,844	87,304
(3) Bidi Industry ..	32	3,761	59,213	127,500
(4) Cigarette ..	6	1,484	335	180
(5) Cotton Mills ..	231	169,851	21,04435	...
(6) Jute Mills ..	25	53,156	869,387	...
(7) Silk Mills ..	32	3,758	45,178	...
(8) Woollen Mills ..	4	3,579	141,163	200
(9) Coir Factories ..	2	72	1080	20
(10) Paper Mills ..	...	...	...	4
(11) Leather and Leather Products ..	7	480	27,30	...
(12) Heavy chemicals ..	4	61	762	...
(13) Matches ..	2	Not known	Not known	15,721
(14) Cement ..	6	1,849	4,842	2,737
(15) Mica Industries ..	...	...	...	...
(16) Engineering except Iron and Steel ..	95	43,615	369,603	18,421
(17) Iron and Steel ..	36	13,372	43,995	222
(18) Others ..	204	48,716	474,556	307
IV. Construction ..	6	2,870	6945	...
V. Electricity, gas, water and sanitary sources ..	26	1,944	8,780	...

Industry	No. of Disputes	No. of workers involved	Total No. of man days lost during 1953	During December 1956
(VI) Commerce	19	6,359	5,913	...
(1) Wholesale and retail trade	3	98	448	10,694 - 869
(3) Banking and Insurance	16	6,261	5,465	9,825
(3) Others	...	...	...	...
(VII) Transport, Storage, Communications	48	40,120	232,685	1,695
(1) Docks and Ports	24	19,635	59,272	...
(2) Railways	15	7,047	41,443	400
(3) Other	9	13,438	131,970	...
(VIII) Services	26	4,358	35,209	1,265
(IX) Miscellaneous	53	5468	74,999	60 771
Total	1166	527,767	5 6,97848	269, 949

(*Indian Labour Gazette, May 1956, p 836.*)

Classification of Industrial Disputes by Duration 1955.

Duration	No. of Disputes	Percentage to total 1955	total 1954
A day or less	4.3	36.3	32.8
More than a day up to 5 days	281	24.7	28.9
„ 5 days upto 10 days	204	18.0	17.3
„ 10 „ 20 „	81	7.1	7.0
„ 20 „ 30 „	30	2.6	4.9
More than 30 day	96	8.5	5.4
Not known	32	2.4	3.7
Total	1,137	100.0	100.0

Sixty-one per cent of the disputes which ended during the year 1955 were each of duration of 5 days or less only 8.5 per cent of the disputes lasted for more than 30 days.

We may summarise the main causes of strikes as below :¹

The main causes of strikes can be placed under two heads (i) Motivating and (ii) Influencing.

¹ Srivastava, *Op. Cit.* pp. 84-85.

(i) *Motivating Causes* include the economic distress and dissatisfaction prevailing among the labourers due to absence of a living wage, proper working and living conditions, welfare and security against unemployment, sickness, accidents and such benefits as pensions, provident funds and maternity, etc. They also include denial to the workers of their right to association and organisation and also the non-recognition of their unions. Then attempts made by utilising the force of police, lathi charge and firing, by getting them imprisoned and their leaders beaten, insulted and dishonoured by hired *goondas* by creating communal or rival unions for breaking the workers' solidarity and by ejecting them from their houses, only cement their feeling of hatred and disgust and poison the atmosphere of industrial relationship for a long time. The ground for conflict is thus fully prepared by these motivating causes.

(ii) *Influencing Causes.* Sometimes certain other causes non-economic and unconnected with industry, political agitation and propaganda by some selfish labour leaders for their own political or party ends influence the workers to go on strikes.

Consequences of Strikes

Strikes and lock-outs disturb the economic, social and political life of a country. Generally speaking the strikes and lock-outs are regarded as menaces to the public safety. They infringe upon property rights and become malacious in their effects if not in their purpose.¹ and they are regarded as war or at any rate a blockade.

The strikes involve a heavy loss of man-days, as will be clear from the following data :—

Year	No. of workers involved	Loss of Man-days	Loss of man-days per worker involved
1921-29 (Yearly Av.)	364,112	9,360,937	25.7
1930-39 (do.)	265,427	4,004,209	15.8
1939-45 (do.)	3,748,068	31,524,636	6.8
1946	1,961,948	12,717,762	6.4
1947	1,840,784	16,562,666	8.9
1948	1,332,956	8,238,456	6.2
1949	685,457	6,600,595	9.6
1950	719,883	12,806,704	17.9
1951	691,000	3,820,000	5.5
1952	809,000	3,340,000	4.1
1953	467,000	3,380,000	7.2
1954	477,000	3,720,000	7.9
1955	527,767	5,697,848	7.4
1956	722,334	7,095,960	9.2

¹ Catlin, Warren. B., *The Labour Problem*. p. 416.

This huge waste of man-days results in certain amount of dislocation in the production work. A strike in a railway, tramway, bus service, post and telegraph offices, coal and iron mining, electric and water supply concerns disorganises the public life and subjects it to grave hardship. Even when it takes place in consumers' industries the public becomes worried and a shortage of supply temporarily raises the cost of living.

The workers are also badly affected by strikes. Their economic conditions deteriorate, unemployment increases. For workers the consequence of strike is terrible. Loss of wages, employment and future prospects, persecution by *goondas* repression by police and State authorities, firing and jail, starvation and begging, all they have to suffer. The Bihar Labour Enquiry Committee stated that the strike that occurred in the TISCO in 1928, lasted for 105 days and caused to the workers a net loss in wages amounting to Rs 25 lakhs.¹ Similarly the general strike in Bengal Jute Mills of 1938 caused a loss of wages to the extent of 35½ lakhs.² The Bombay general strike of 1950, which lasted for 63 days caused an estimated loss of Rs. 361,97,109 to the workers.³

Also those who go on strikes suffer heavy losses due to the fact that percentage of unsuccessful strikes has been higher than that of the successful and partially successful ones. The following table shows the result of strikes :—

Year	No. of strikes	Successful	Partially successful	Unsuccessful	In progress
1921	396	92	87	211	6
1926	128	12	104	Not known	Not known
1931	166	23	42	99	2
1936	197	31	43	76	7
1939	406	63	144	185	14
1941	359	75	111	168	5
1943	716	138	210	314	13
1946	1629*	278	274	696	29
1948	1259	234	143	528	21
1951	1071*	150	145	431	27
1952	963	119	118	384	13
1953	772	122	96	286	22

Note .—1 317 cases in 1946 ; 305 in 1949 and 318 in 1951 are indefinite or not known.

1 Bihar Labour Enquiry Committee, p 259.

2 R K. Mukherjee, *The Indian Working Class*, p. 309

3 Srivastava, *Industrial Peace and Labour in India*, p. 96.

Classification of Industrial Disputes by Results—1955

Results	No. of disputes	Percentage to total	
		1955	1954
Successful	211	18.5	14.3
Partially successful	86	7.6	10.2
Unsuccessful	291	25.6	32.0
Indefinite	446	39.2	28.3
Not known	103	9.1	15.2
Total	1137	100.0	100.0

This table shows the distribution of disputes according to results. Over 25 per cent of the disputes which ended during the year 1955 were unsuccessful from the point of view of employees. This figure was appreciably lower than the corresponding figure for 1954. The percentage of disputes which were either successful or partially successful recorded a slight increase as compared with the previous year.

It is interesting to note that percentage of unsuccessful strikes is very high in comparison to others. A strike when it becomes unsuccessful, besides inflicting financial loss on the workers, demoralises them, makes them sullen and disappointed, and shakes their confidence in the trade union movement. Frequently the labour union itself cripples down and becomes defunct for some time.

It may be pointed out that even unsuccessful strikes teach the workers the lesson of unity, class consciousness and brotherhood, and though unions may wither away temporarily they emerge out much stronger after some time. The labourers go to the work with a feeling of intense bitterness and hatred towards the employers, but as soon as they get an opportunity they are again on strike, better prepared and more strongly organised and determined. On the whole, the Indian worker has learnt "to cling to the right of strike as one of the chief props and stays of his liberty and a valuable form of protest against oppression by profit, seeking employers."¹

Even the employers are not relieved of the heavy losses. "The purpose of a strike is to convince the employer that it is in his interest to accede to the demands of the union, to cause him to realise that it is more costly to oppose than to accept the union's programmes."² During prosperous years, when profits of employers go on increasing, strikes cause much loss to them. The production work stops, the sales go down, the market is lost and

¹ Catlin, *Op Cit*, p. 412.

² Lester, R. A. *Economics of Labour*, p. 416.

the goodwill is marred by adverse publicity carried on by unions in public against the concern in which strike has taken place. Besides huge sums of money are wasted for crushing down the strikes by engaging strike-breakers and black-legs, and maintaining police force, guards, for propaganda, publicity and espionage; and in organising carrying counter demonstrations, processions and meetings of black legs. Even *goondas* are also engaged for creating disturbances, riots and disorders.

Condition of the Workers during Industrial Disputes.

During the strikes the workers find it very difficult to maintain themselves. There is hardly any union in India which can afford to pay to its members, although some of the better organised unions undertake to provide a little temporary relief to individual members who have been victimized during a dispute, either by giving them a lump sum or some money every month until they can find employment elsewhere.¹

It is during these long disputes, sometimes running into many months, that one realizes the dogged nature of the *ordinarily placed* and docile Indian worker. A certain amount of relief may come from outside: from other workers' organisation in India or abroad, or from employers in other countries.² But all this is inadequate, even negligible, when the number involved and their families are taken into account. During these days the workers curtail their expenditure on drink and drugs. Great economy in food is observed, a single meal sufficing in most cases. As many as possible return to their homes, thus partially solving the problem of relief and minimizing the chances of disorder. Some of them even find odd occupations in the neighbourhood and earn a precarious and scanty livelihood. But as against this, there is invisible pressure of the police and the employers, exerted in a variety of ways, particularly after the first week or two.

When a strike occurs, if conditions of the industry are such that prolonged cessation of work could inflict heavy losses on the employers, there is, after an initial display or stubbornness and resentment, an inclination on their part to come to terms. In such cases, the dispute is comparatively short-lived.

Strikes and lock-outs in India spread over two, three or even four months. The first few days are comparatively easy to pass. The pressure of hunger has not yet itself felt, processions with music and garlands for some 'Labour Leader' are carried on. The first signs of strain begin to manifest themselves for a fortnight. Daily meetings tend gradually to lose their interest, the attention of the police are apt to become increasingly

1 *Bombay Textile Labour Enquiry Committee Report*, 1941, p. 266.

2 *Srivastava, Ibid*, pp. 106-107.

uncomfortable and the shopkeepers hesitate to supply foodstuffs on credit. If the workers' morale shows signs of weakening no particularly strong measures are called for. In the smaller towns motor lorries, filled with agricultural labourers picked from neighbouring villages and given a joy ride and a meal for going into the mills, create the impression that there is an adequate supply of blackleg labour. If among the strikers there are any members of so-called criminal tribes under special regulations, the police bring pressure to bear on them to break away from the rest. Another device is to play upon caste or religious feelings though they are seldom noticeable among the workers in ordinary times in order to break the workers' solidarity.

The employers, on their part, declare lock-out in anticipation of strikes. Then the workers are harassed and terrorised by the private guards, watchmen and *goondas* recruited by the employers. The labour leaders are insulted and pickets of workers posted at the mill gates are forcibly dispersed, and the meetings of the workers are not allowed to be held in the mill surroundings. The right to organise meetings in the compounds of the *chawls* and *bustis* are denied and trade union organisers and other public workers are occasionally refused access to the workmen's dwellings owned by the employers.

The strikers are dismissed and those occupying the houses built by the employers, are ordered to vacate or else their bag and baggage are forcibly removed from the houses. The supply of water and light is stopped to them, and latrine facilities are denied and hospitals and dispensaries closed for them.

Besides, propaganda are commenced against labour leaders and trade union organisations. Labour leaders are labelled as self-seekers, agitators, opportunists and anti-social elements. Side by side strike breaking is also resorted to. Stragglers from amongst the strikers are discovered and are induced, coerced and intimidated to resume work.

Prevention of Industrial Disputes

Prevention is always better than cure and, therefore, we shall first of all discuss those methods which can prevent the occurrence of industrial disputes in the country. As referred to above, these conflicts are due to the clash between the rights of property and rights of humanity and as such we have to narrow down the broad gulf between capital and labour. For this purpose means have got to be evolved for establishing contact between the employers and the employees.

Industrial democracy is, therefore, as indispensable for industrial peace, as political democracy is for political peace in a country. "The absence of political democracy means that autocracy must be overthrown by revolution instead of by selection and by bullets instead of by ballots. The absence of industrial democracy results in economic unrest, which is expressed in strikes and other forms of industrial warfare instead of peaceful negotiation."¹

The Royal Commission on Labour had suggested three ways to stabilise the industrial relationship :

(1) The first was to encourage the development of a stable Trade Union with access to those responsible for the management.

(2) The second was the appointment of Labour offices in undertakings to look after the welfare of the workers and to represent their grievances to the employers.

(3) The third, and the most important, was the organisation of Works Committees in individual establishments and a Joint Industrial Council for different industries.

The Commission observed : "We believe that if they are given proper encouragement and past errors are avoided, Works Committees can play a useful part in the Indian Industrial system."²

The Works Committees are institutions of industrial democracy. The Royal Commission emphasised upon the importance of Works Committees as an internal machinery for the prevention and settlement of industrial disputes. Such institutions should be genuine democratic institutions to promote understanding and goodwill and not bitterness and acrimony. Such committees has been set up in Britain, U. S. A., Denmark, Italy, Austria, Czechoslovakia, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, Poland, Norway and India. The main functions of these Committees are :—

(i) to give the employees a wider interest in and greater responsibility for the conditions under which their work is performed ;

(ii) To enforce the regulations contained in the collective agreements drawn up by recognised employers' associations and workers' organisations.

(iii) to prevent frictions and misunderstandings. These committees also deal with the methods of wage payments ; (iv) the distribution of working hours and fixation of shifts ; (v) questions of physical welfare ; (vi) questions of discipline and conduct as

1 Pattersn,, S. H, *Social Aspects of Democracy*, p. 447.

2 *Report, Op Cit.*, p. 342.

between the management and the workmen, *i.e.* malingering, bullying, time-keeping, publicity in regard to rules, supervision of notice boards ; and (v) investigation of circumstances tending to reduce efficiency.

The Works Committees have the representations of both the workers and the management. On the labour side, the rank and file of the workers elect their own representatives ; and on the side of the management, the supervisory, technical and administrative sections are given representation.¹

Such Committees in India have been working since 1920 in the presses owned by the Government of India ; in TISCO, Jamshedpur : in Buckingham and Karnatic Mills in Madras and in Railways.

Joint consultation at the unit level is secured through Works Committees, established under the Industrial Disputes Act, 1947, in units employing 100 or more workers. Apart from this there are several Committees known as joint-committees, production committees. Joint Committees and Production Committees are to be formed in Bombay under the Bombay Industrial Relations Act, 1946. In the central sphere undertakings there were more than 650 Works Committees which actively functioned during 1954-55. Many of the undertakings had also set up Production Committees and Accident Prevention Committees. Of the total number of 2095 committees in 1954 according to the Labour Year Book, 1953-54, (assuming that the units which have Works Committees one in each of them) 1840 were in Part A States, 96 in Part B States, 155 in Part C States and the remaining 5 in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands. Of the Part A States Madras, West Bengal and Bombay had 520, 512 and 275 Works Committees respectively. In Assam, Andhra, Bihar and Punjab the numbers were 172, 110, 120 and 96 respectively. Among the Part B States, Travancore-Cochin had the largest number, namely 32. The number of Works Committees among the Part C States was the highest in Coorg, namely, 81 (of which 80 were in plantations), next to it came Delhi with 47.

Out of the total of 2,095 Works Committees, industrial classification is available for 1,606 ; of the latter nearly half are in the manufacturing group. Slightly less than one-third are in agricultural and allied activities group and the remaining in other industry groups. Among the Committees in the manufacturing group, out of 688 Committees 291 are in Textiles, 112 in food, beverage and tobacco ; and 110 in the machinery group. Of the 291 committees in the Textile group, 242 are in Madras and West Bengal. Andhra accounts for 67 out of 112 Works Committees in the food, beverage and total group. In the machinery group, 86 of the 110 Works Committees belong to West Bengal and 23 to Delhi.

¹ *The Indian Labour Year Book*, 1953-54 (1955), p. 173.

Trade unions can have direct negotiations with the employers and thus can remove the intermediaries who unnecessarily misrepresent the facts to the employers. Workers will also gain by collective and united action by countering the strong bargaining power of the employers and thereby they can get a fair deal at their hands. At present out of about 4000 unions in the country, about 2500 are affiliated to the four national organisations, namely, Indian National Trade Union Congress, All-India Trade Union Congress, Hind Mazdoor Sabha and United Trade Union Congress.

Besides a direct and close touch between the employers and the workers and the promotion of healthy trade unions and Works Committees, another preventive methods can be (i) to try to remove the very cause which give rise to these disputes, (ii) it should be made obligatory on the part of the employers in the large industrial undertakings in the country to frame and enforce with the approval of the Government standing orders defining precisely the conditions of employment under them. Both labour and management must adopt the policy of give and take ; only then can such an innovation bring about amity and goodwill, besides accelerating industrial production.¹

Methods of Settlement of Industrial Disputes

So far the measures likely to prevent the emergence of industrial disputes have been dealt with. In spite of these measures, if disputes develop they must be quickly and amicably settled and three methods have been generally adopted for this purpose. They are (a) investigation ; (b) conciliation ; and (c) arbitration.

(a) Investigation in industrial disputes is conducted by a Board or a Court appointed by the Government ; if this appointment of the Board is on the request by either of the parties or by both it is known as 'voluntary investigation' and if enquiry is conducted at the instance of the Government without consent of the parties, it is 'compulsory investigation.' These investigations only aim at discovering the facts and on submission of the Reports to the Government it is made public in order to create a public opinion and thus indirectly aim at bringing settlement of disputes. But such a method is suitable for those countries, where the general public is educated and the employers and workers both fear the consequences of disobeying the public opinion. Moreover, investigation method can be successful if accompanied with conciliation and mediation method.

1 Cole and Meller, *Worker's Control and Self-Government*, p. 16.

2 R. K. Mukerjee, *Op. Cit*, pp. 350-352.

Conciliation and Arbitration

Now practically all countries have established some form of conciliation or arbitration. "Conciliation is a process by which the representatives of the workers and the employers are brought together before a third person or a group of persons with a view to persuading them to come to an agreement among themselves, by mutual discussion between the two parties" The other method may be mediation or arbitration by which is meant the intervention of an outsider when the negotiations of the ordinary Conciliation Board appear to have broken down. These methods of conciliation and mediation make an effort for bringing the parties together for a peaceful settlement of difference by negotiation and discussion. Arbitration is the means of securing a definite judgment or award for any controversial issue by referring it to a third party. The aim of both these methods is to reduce to the minimum the possibilities of industrial warfare. These methods of conciliation and arbitration can be voluntary or compulsory as in the case of investigation.

The preference of conciliation over arbitration can hardly be over-emphasised in promoting the industrial harmony. It has been experienced that where adjudication had failed to bring about the desired results, conciliation process achieved remarkable success. If human touch is employed in the shape of conciliation it seldom fails to produce results. It should be, however, kept in mind that in conciliation it is essential that both the parties must be made to appreciate each other's point of view, and that is possible only if both the parties are kept in touch with each other not only during the period of dispute but on a permanent footing.

Arbitration can be voluntary or compulsory : (i) The essential element in voluntary arbitration is the voluntary submission of cases to an arbitrator and the subsequent attendance of witnesses and investigations and enforcement of awards may not be necessary, because there is no compulsion. (ii) As against this compulsory arbitration implies compulsory attendance of witnesses, compulsory ¹⁰⁶ ~~Penalties~~ of investigation and compulsory award, with penalties for breaches of these awards. Compulsory arbitration, unless sparingly done and with considerable caution may amount to an unjustified State imposition and may pave the way for a complete negation of the principle of democracy. The Royal Commission on Labour was against compulsory arbitration and said that the effect on industry would be disastrous if there was a general tendency to look to some external authority to preserve industrial peace and to discourage settlement by the industry itself. Even otherwise it is said that compulsory arbitration will defeat its own purpose instead of building peace and is bound to create greater dissatisfaction among the workers. 5

It would be instructive to know the various grounds on which the American labour movement is unalterably opposed to compulsory arbitration. "In the first place, they are opposed to it because, resort to compulsory arbitration would promote and prolong industrial disputes.

"Secondly, 'Compulsory arbitration undermines self-government' in industry.

"Thirdly, 'Compulsory arbitration takes away from employers and unions the responsibility for working out their mutual problems and transfers it to Government created tribunals.

"Fourthly, Compulsory arbitration kills collective bargaining and replaces it with litigation.

"Fifthly, by requiring even an hour of compulsory labour, it would subject the workers to involuntary servitude.

"Sixthly, Compulsory arbitration exposes workers to arbitrary restraints and penalties before trial and convictions.

"Seventhly, it denies the working people the right to protest and resist a wrong and to strive peacefully for improvement in their conditions.

"Lastly, Compulsory arbitration means loss of personal freedom, loss of nobility, loss of power of initiative, loss of hope and aspiration for self-betterment."¹

No doubt compulsory arbitration means loss of personal freedom, loss of nobility, loss of power of initiative, loss of hope and aspiration for self-betterment, but the condition of India is altogether different. Here we find that the trend of enlightened public opinion is slowly but steadily drifting in favour of compulsory arbitration only because of the fact that the labour is uneducated and unorganised and due to dominance of outsiders in the trade unions, is not in a position to place effectively its case in the conciliation proceedings. India cannot afford, at the present moment, the occasional luxury of watching the trial of strength and a tug of war between labour and capital just as people in other countries can afford.

In India, the procedure for the settlement of industrial disputes is regulated by the Trade Disputes Act of 1929. It provides for the setting up of an *ad hoc* Court of Enquiry or Board of Conciliation in the case of trouble. A Court of Enquiry is to consist of one or more independent persons appointed by the Local Government or the Central Government, as the case may be. A

1 T. L. Acharya, *Planning for Labour*, pp 191, 192.

Board of Conciliation may consist of an independent persons, or an independent person acting as a Chairman with two or four other persons who may be independent or representative in equal numbers, of the parties of issue. The duties of the Court of Enquiry are confined to the investigation of the matters referred to them and to reporting to the authority which appointed them. While Boards of Conciliation are charged with the duty of attempting to effect a fair and amicable settlement, and if no settlement is reached, then of reporting to the appointing authority. When the appointing authority has received the report of a Court or Board, it may publish the report as soon as possible, with necessary safeguards as to confidential matters. There the statutory obligations of the public authorities come to an end, reliance being placed on public opinion to induce the parties to accept the recommendations that may be made in the report.

The questions (a) whether it should be made obligatory on the public authorities to refer disputes to arbitration, and (b) whether force of law be given to the findings of the tribunals appointed to deal with disputes, were examined by the Royal Commission on Labour in India. Yet the Commission did not fail to express its opinion that the authorities should make more earlier use of their powers to appoint Court of Enquiry and Boards of Commission. There seems to be 'said the Commission "a tendency at present for Government to withhold their hand until a dispute has attained serious magnitude and constitutes a threat to public peace. There may be a case for the appointment of a tribunal, even if there is little danger of disturbance and no claimants demand for action on the part of the public."'

The opinion of the Commission was related to the solid facts of Indian experience ; for a reference to industrial disputes since 1921 affords abundant proof that the Indian worker is only too willing to accept negotiation and arbitration as a method of settlement. Between 1921 and 1928 there were 22 disputes in which, as a result of informal negotiation by the Provincial Government concerned or one of its officials, Boards of Conciliation or Court of Enquiry were appointed, and on the most of these the awards were accepted by both sides.

More than 550 disputes occurred in India, during the period 1929-33 but only two Courts of Enquiry and two Boards of Conciliation were appointed by the Government ; and between 1924 and 1936 although 11 disputes were settled by conciliation or arbitration, only three of them related to cases where action was taken by the Provincial Governments, under the Trade Disputes Act. And it should be said to the credit of the Congress Provincial

Governments that within less than a year of their assumption of office they appointed in the case of at least 15 disputes Committees of Enquiry and Boards of Conciliation, most of them under the Trade Disputes Act and the work of these tribunals was remarkable. "The rights of the workers to form unions has only been recognised by these tribunals but in many cases conceded by the employers without any other condition than that of registration under the Trade Union Act and prevention of strikes. Wages have been increased, particularly for the textile workers, by proportions reaching up to a maximum of 25% in some cases. Holidays with pay have been recommended and in some centres granted by employers. Schemes of sickness insurance are being evolved in more than one Province and will form the basis of legislation or voluntary agreement at several centres"¹

This Act renders general or political strikes, *hartals* and lockouts illegal on the ground that such strikes may compel the Government to take or abstain from taking any particular course of action. "In the course of Public Utility service (such as railways posts and telegraphs, electric and water-works, public conservancy and sanitation which are essential to health, safety and welfare of the community), fourteen days' notice is necessary before the strike, thus placing workers in these trades at a disadvantage without any compensatory advantage as regards conditions of employment. In the case of other concerns strikes and lock-outs can be declared but a definite machinery is provided for the settlement of such disputes when they arise." The Act tries to copy the less valuable part of the machinery employed in Great Britain, while ignoring the most valuable part. There, less reliance is placed on *ad hoc* public enquiries of the kind contemplated in the Indian Trade Disputes Act than in the efforts of the conciliation officers and others to bring the parties privately to agreement.

These defects have been partially removed by the Government of Bombay in their Trade Disputes Conciliation Act, 1934. This Act was first made applicable to the textile industry, in Bombay City and suburban District, but was made capable of expansion by the Government to any industry or locality. It provides for the creation of a Permanent Conciliation Board with the Commissioner of Labour as *ex-officio* Chief Conciliator, and for a Labour Officer "to watch the interests of workers with a view to promote harmonious relations between the employers and workmen and to take steps to represent the grievances of workmen to employers for the purpose of obtaining their redress." The arrangement is very satisfactory and complete for which the duties of the Chief Conciliator are to bring about a settlement of differen-

1 B. Shiva Rao, *Op. Cit.*, p. 198.

2 B. Shiva Rao, *Op. Cit.*, p. 195

ces of disputes between the employer and the worker which have started or are about to start. The duty of the Labour Officer is to remove the grievance of the workers which are the root of such disputes.

Bombay Industrial Disputes Act of 1938

The Bombay Government passed the above Act in 1938. Under this Act a permanent Industrial Court has been set up. The Labour Commissioner is the *ex-officio* Chief Conciliator. A provision has been made for conciliation and arbitration of disputes. The acceptance of award had not been made compulsory but all the disputes have to be submitted for peaceful settlement before lock outs and strikes can be declared. The Trade Unions have been divided into "Representative" "Registered" and "Qualified" and detailed provisions were made to safeguard labour interests. A trade union was registered if it had a membership of 5% of the total number of workers and was recognised by the employers, or if it had 25% membership independently of the employers' recognition. A union with only 5% membership not recognised by the employers became a qualified union. A registered union which had a membership of 25% of the total number of workers for a continuous period of six months became a representative union. Payment of a small monthly subscription is made compulsory for membership. Not more than one union will represent any one locality. If the locality has no registered union, all the workers can select five members from amongst themselves to represent their case.

Each employer must submit for the approval of the Labour Commissioner, standing orders relating to discipline and working of the establishment. Some formalities are made necessary before a change can be effected. Three distinct steps are provided before a strike or lock-out can be declared. A notice has first to be given. Negotiations regarding the proposed change will then take place, and if an agreement is reached it will be registered. If no settlement is reached the contending party has to submit a full statement of case to specified officials. An industrial dispute is then recorded in a register. Effort at conciliation has now to be made. The Chief Conciliator submits a full report to the Government. In case of failure, as a final step, the Government can refer the matter to a Board of Conciliation. The Government lays down the time limit for all these stages. Strikes and lock-outs are illegal during the conciliation proceedings.

The Bombay Act has three important features, *viz.* ; (1) Any one registered union may be declared representative for the locality. Moreover, the Government has been given authority to extend to the whole industry settlement agreed to by a majority.

The Act also encourages registration which has not yet been very popular with Indian Trade Unions.

(2) *Secondly*, the violation of vague and unwritten promises often became the subject of dispute in India. The Bombay Act insists on written and registered agreements and standing orders. Thereby it avoids all possibility of much unnecessary misunderstanding.

(3) *Finally*, compulsory arbitration is not enforced though all the advantages of peaceful settlement have been secured.

After the outbreak of World War II several strikes occurred. The workers put up claims for a share in abnormal war profits. Lest it should affect the war effort, it was felt necessary to devise some machinery to avoid strikes and lock-outs. With this object in view Rule 81-A of the Defence of India Rules was issued in January, 1942. According to this rule, the Central Government and Provincial Governments had the power to issue an order prohibiting strikes and lock-outs requiring employers to observe certain conditions of employment referring to the Government a dispute for conciliation or adjudication and enforcing the award of the authority to which the dispute was referred.

Industrial Disputes Act of 1947

The next step was the passing of the Industrial Disputes Act of 1947. It provides several methods for settling of disputes. There is provision for the appointment of conciliation officers by the Provincial Governments. In case the conciliation officer fails to resolve the dispute a Conciliation Board could be appointed to collect the necessary facts about the dispute and to report within a specified time.

The Act embodied the principle of compulsory arbitration. A Provincial Government can refer the dispute to a Tribunal for adjudication and enforce its award in part or whole. No strike or lock-out is permitted during the pendency of conciliation or adjudication proceedings. Very stringent regulations have been laid down about strikes in public utility services including all basic and essential industries. These are strict penalties for illegal strikes. Political and sympathetic strikes are, however, not prohibited.

The Act provided for the establishment of Works Committees, in industrial establishments employing 100 or more persons. These Committees are intended to iron out day-to-day differences between the management and the employers.

The year 1948 will go down in the history of industrial relations as a very eventful year. At no previous time was so much attention

paid to the amelioration of the conditions of labour. A determined effort was made to place labour-capital relations on satisfactory and stable basis. An Industrial Truce Agreement was reached between the representatives of the employers and the employees meeting under the auspices of the Central Government in Delhi on 15th December, 1947. It called upon labour and capital to observe truce for three years. To implement it a conference of Provincial Labour Ministers was held in May 1948. This Conference decided to set up Tripartite Advisory Committee as the pivot of the entire truce machinery—fair wages and fair return on capital. A Housing Board was also set up to implement the decision of the Central Government to build 10 lakhs houses in 10 years. Employment Exchanges and the Training centres set up by the Labour Ministry were placed on a permanent footing.

The Expert Committee on Fair Return on Capital has recommended that after allowing depreciation on income-tax basis and then placing 10% of the net profits in the reserve fund 6% on capital employed (i.e., the paid-up capital plus all reserves, held for business purpose) should be a fair return on capital. Of the surplus above it 50% should be distributed among labour and 50% should go to augment dividends.

In pursuance of the Industrial Truce Relation Works Committees were set up in the various Provinces and States. It seems to have resulted in substantial improvement in relations between labour and capital. As a result the number of man-days lost decreased from 16.6 millions in 1947 to 6.6 in 1949, and so also the number of disputes fell from 1811 in 1947 to 920 in 1949.

Industrial Relations Bill, 1950

The Governments of India had, for sometime, under consideration another measure for the settlement of industrial disputes, known as the Labour Relations Bill, 1950. The object of the new Bill was to enact a comprehensive legislation on the subject. It was also intended to ensure uniformity of principles of labour laws in all States.

Among other things, the Bill provides for a number of authorities including registering officers, Works Committees, Conciliation officers, Commissioners of Enquiry and hierarchy of Court. In some quarters doubts have been expressed about the wisdom of creating a multiplicity of agencies and a system of court parallel to the civil judiciary. As in civil judiciary, the final decision may be by enterprising lawyers instead of speedy settlement of disputes there may be prolonged litigation.

There was also provision that the award of the Industrial Court may be modified or set aside by the concerned government.

But the bill evoked strong criticism from the trade unions as well as from the employers and hence it was later on withdrawn.

By another amendment Act in 1950 provision is made for the establishment of a Labour Appellate Tribunal for hearing appeals from awards or decisions of Industrial tribunals, Courts, Wage Boards and other statutory Boards set up under Central or State Enactments for adjudication of disputes. This too gives scope for unnecessary and vexatious prolongation of disputes in which labour is further handicapped by the provision for being represented by lawyers before the Boards and Tribunals. But this body being central organisation, reviewing all awards which may be referred to it, its decision will set uniformity of principles regarding the settlement of industrial disputes.

There has been of late a welcome change of attitude on the part of Government during the last few years or so. This change was reflected at the Tripartite Conference held at Nainital in November 1952, when Mr. V. V. Giri, the then Union Labour Minister, expressed his faith in direct negotiations and collective bargaining, instead of compulsory arbitration.

Industrial Disputes Act, 1956

A Labour Regulations Bill was introduced in Parliament in 1950 but it was not proceeded with as it evoked much criticism both from the millowners and the labour leaders. A revised Bill to amend the Industrial Disputes Act, 1947, was introduced in the Lok Sabha in the last week of September, 1956 and was passed by Parliament as the Industrial Disputes (Amendment and Miscellaneous Provisions) Act, 1955. It is unfortunate that this Act does not give effect to the Giri Approach except to a limited extent. The chances are that it would enlarge the area of industrial disputes and would make the settlement of industrial disputes more difficult. The main provisions of this Act, which closely follows the pattern of Bombay Act of 1946, are as follows :

(i) The definition of workman has been enlarged and now technical staff and supervisory personnel whose emoluments do not exceed Rs. 500 per month would be included in this category. Since many of such employees are given confidential and managerial duties and are more a part of the employer than of the employees, this provision is likely to create fresh difficulties for millowners.

(ii) The Industrial Disputes (Appellate Tribunal) Act, 1950, has been repealed and the Labour Appellate Tribunal has been abolished. This appellate authority brought uniformity in labour conditions in different parts of the country and laid down many healthy forms and regulations and its abolition will prove a serious

handicap in the future. The only saving grace is that "the absence of an appellate authority may possibly induce a sense of realism among both employers and employees."

(iii) The Act "sets up three types of original tribunal ; Labour Courts, Industrial Tribunals and National Tribunals. The Labour Courts will have jurisdiction to adjudicate on industrial disputes relating to such matters as propriety or legality of an order passed by an employer under the standing orders, the discharge or dismissal of employees, and illegality or otherwise of a strike or lock-out. An Industrial Tribunal will adjudicate on disputes relating to matters such as wages, hours of work, bonus, rationalisation and retrenchment. A National Tribunal will adjudicate on matters which, in the opinion of the Government, involve questions of national importance or which are of such a nature that establishments situated in more than one State are likely to be interested in or affected by the disputes". There is no provision for appeal from any of these three tiers of adjudication machinery and, therefore, special care has been taken about the qualification of persons who might be appointed to them.

(iv) The Act makes certain questionable changes with regard to the Standing Orders. The employers cannot introduce any change in respect of certain specified matters with regard to conditions of work without giving the workmen concerned 21 days, notice of his intention to do so. The Act also amends the Industrial Employment (Standing Orders) Act and gives power to the certifying officer and the other authorities to consider the fairness or reasonableness of the Standing Orders before certifying them. In the past the employer alone was empowered to apply for the modification of Standing Orders. The Act also empowers a workman to apply to the certifying officer for modification of the Standing Orders in the same way as the employer.

(v) "A notable concession to employers—not perhaps so much a concession as a vindication of justice—is the provision that an employer may, during the pendency of a dispute, discharge or punish an employee for any misconduct not connected with the dispute. The employer has, in such cases, to pay a month's wages to the worker concerned and apply to the authorities for approval of his action." This is calculated to improve discipline in industrial establishments.

The worst feature of the Act, however, is the power it gives to Government to modify an industrial award. It is with great difficulty that the conflicting interests of employers and workmen are reconciled in an award and it will only complicate matters if the Government has the power to modify it. It will not improve matters if, as provided in the Act, the Government's order of

modification is placed before Parliament for a fortnight during which a resolution could be moved for its approval or rejection. "The real point is that with the knowledge that the Government have the ultimate power to alter the award as they like the parties to the dispute will not place all their cards on the table and will not come to a speedy agreement." A good feature of the Act, is that now "it is open to the two parties to sign an arbitration agreement and refer the dispute to an arbitrator.

Organisations on the model of I. L. O., representing Government, employers and employees have been in existence since then and now they have become an integral part of the industrial structure of the country. Among the important organisations of tripartite nature are the Indian Labour Conference, the Standing Labour Committee and the various Industrial and Advisory Committees. Most of the States have independent tripartite machinery on these lines. Also Indian Labour Conferences are held regularly every year. The 18th session was held at Mysore in January, 1954. So also Labour Ministers' Conference, which though not a tripartite organisation, is closely connected with it, met in November 1954, at New Delhi. Among other points of Agenda, they discussed the proposed amendment to the Industrial Disputes Act 1947. The institution of the tripartite labour machinery, the Labour Ministers' conferences, which are closely associated with the machinery and the institution of Joint Consultations in industry auger well for better Industrial relations.

Important among the tripartite bodies constituted by the Central Government are :—

- (i) the Minimum Wages Central Advisory Board to hold enquiries and advise the Central Government, for fixation of minimum wages in undertaking in the central spheres ;
- (ii) The Gorakhpur Labour Enquiry Committee ;
- (iii) The Advisory Committee (Dock Workers) ;
- (iv) The Seamen's Employment Board, Bombay ;
- (v) Central Board of Trustees of the Provident Fund Scheme ; and
- (vi) The Advisory Committee for Coal and Mica Mines Labour Welfare Fund.

However, a legislation which prohibits strikes and enforces adjudications is against not only the working class movement but also against the industrial peace. Real industrial peace must be built on the solid basis of a powerful trade unionism, free and

compulsory collective bargaining and only wherever necessary through adjudication. We close this chapter with the remarks of Mr. Hobson. He observes, "The absolute right to lock-out or to strike must go. It is unjust, in that it is an appeal to force in a matter of disputed right ; it is inhuman, because of the misery it causes to the workers ; it is wasteful of the resources of capital and labour ; it is wicked, because it stirs up hate ; it is anti-social in that it denies and disrupts the solidarity of the community. Common sense, as well as the finer feelings for peace, humanity and equity demands that industrial disputes that cannot find amicable settlement between the parties immediately concerned must be submitted to some impartial board or court whose award, if the pressure of public opinion does not suffice for settlement, be made compulsory."¹

1 J. A. Hobson, *The Conditions of Industrial Peace*, p. 30.

CHAPTER XVI

PROFIT SHARING AND COLLECTIVE BARGAINING.

(i) Profit Sharing

✓ What is Profit-Sharing ?

Profit-sharing has been defined as "an arrangement entered into, by which the employee receives a share, fixed in advance, of the profits." Profit sharing is not a system of wage payment as such. The amount which a worker may receive on account of profit-sharing is always very uncertain because of the uncertainty of profits themselves. Sometimes profits may altogether be non-existent and actually there may be losses.

Origin of Profit-Sharing

The origin of profit-sharing may be traced to the ancient practice which prevails even now in many cases of "product sharing." Agricultural land and groves are often leased out on the understanding that the produce will be divided among the owner and the lessees in a certain proportion. This is sometimes called "*batai system*". In its modern garb "profit sharing" is said to have struck the mind of a French house-painter, M Leclair who calculated that if he could make his employees waste less time and to economise the use of raw materials and tools he could bring about a net saving of over £ 3,000. He, therefore, offered to pay a portion of it to the workmen. Under profit-sharing the profit of a business is ascertained according to ordinary commercial principles after "setting against the income the cost of earning it". (Lord Herschell's definition). However, it must be decided clearly in advance whether the profit is to be taken as before or after charging depreciation on fixed assets, interest, on debentures, income-tax and the like. Sometimes the profit available for division is after paying even the preference share dividend. Another question to be decided is as to what proportion of the profit, which remains after meeting the necessary deductions, is to be distributed to the labourers as their share of profit. Thus, the profit may be shared between capital and labour, say half and half-or in the ratio of 2 : 1 or in some other ratio. There are three main characteristics of labour remuneration in the form of profit-sharing:

(1) Share of profit is payable at long intervals when the final accounts of a firm are prepared and profit or loss is ascertained.

(2) Payment is of an uncertain nature. Profit may be high or low or there may be actual losses in some years.

(3) Payment is not based on individual work, efficiency or merit but it is a remuneration for collective effort, the total remuneration due to workers being divided among the labourers equally or in certain other proportion. These three features distinguish it from "gain sharing and from ordinary system of wage payment"

Forms of Profit-Sharing

Profit-sharing may take various forms such as :

(1) Industry Basis

Here the profits of a number of industrial units in the same industry may be pooled together for determining the share of labourers in profits. Such a scheme has the advantage of putting the whole labour class in particular industry on uniform basis. Moreover, if a certain industrial unit somehow shows loss in a certain year its workers are not deprived of their remuneration, for other units might have made good profit.

(2) Locality Basis

Industrial units of particular locality, in this case, may pool their profits to determine labour's remuneration by way of profit-sharing. However, if there are heterogeneous industrial units in a locality, where labourer's work is of a widely divergent nature, there may be great difficulties in bringing about adjustment.

(3) Unit Basis

This is the simplest way of allowing the labourer a share in the profits of an individual undertaking, the one where they are employed. This brings about more intimate relation between their efforts and reward, as against the first two bases where the reward of labourers depends on the combined efforts of labourers in a number of units.

(4) Department Basis

Sometimes the various departments of an industrial unit may have their separate measures of profit sharing. The workers of a particular department share in the profits made by that department as such. This aims at bringing about still greater intimacy between labourer's efforts and reward.

(5) Individual Basis

Here a worker receives a proportion of profit which may have been earned by a business through the efforts of that particular

worker. This aims at bringing about direct and most intimate relationship between individual efforts and reward. In practice it is impossible to determine such profits made through individual efforts of a particular worker.

Profit sharing in India

Profit sharing was officially referred to for the first time in December, 1947, when the then Finance Minister, Mr. R. K. Shanmukham Chetty, disclosed in the course of discussion on the Interim Budget that the Government were considering the possibilities of providing a scheme for profit-sharing in industry in order to provide labour with an adequate incentive to increase production. Profit sharing reappeared in the 'Truce resolution' unanimously adopted by the Tripartite Industries Conference in New Delhi. Again, the Economic Programme Committee appointed by the A. I. C. C. reiterated in its report the doctrine of profit sharing ; it even went a step further and laid down the broad principles on which any machinery designed for the purpose was to operate. This report was an unofficial document, it was signed by Shri Nehru only in his capacity as Chairman of the National Planning Committee. It must be clearly understood that the Economic Programme Committee was not an executive body, it could merely lay down the lines of general policy and leave it to the Legislature or the Government of India to take suitable measures in the light of economic, social and political expediency.

A conference of Provincial Ministers was held in New Delhi on 3rd and 4th May, 1948, under the chairmanship of the Hon'ble Mr. Jagjiwan Ram to advise on what the fair remuneration for capital should be, and how profits should be shared between capital and labour. The conference held that it was necessary to set up a committee of experts in order to facilitate detailed consideration of the issues by the Central Advisory Council. Accordingly an Expert Committee was appointed consisting of Sir Biren Mookerjee, Mr A. D. Shroff, Mr. S. P. Jain, Prof. Radhakamal Mukerjee, Mr. Asoka Metha, Mr. Khandubhai Desai and Mr. V. B. Karnik, besides the usual representatives each of the Ministry of Industry and Supply, Ministry of Labour, Ministry of Finance and Ministry of Commerce, Mr. S. A. Venkataraman, Secretary Ministry of Industry and Supply acted as Chairman of the Committee.

The Committee was appointed to recommend (a) fair return on capital employed in the industry ; (b) reasonable reserves for the maintenance and expansion of the undertaking, and (c) labour's share of the surplus profits, calculated on a sliding scale normally varying with production, after provision has been made for (a) and (b) above. The Committee was required to pay particular attention to the following points :—

(1) How should capital employed in the industry be determined ?

(2) How should depreciation and taxation be treated for the purpose of arriving at the gross profit to be allocated between capital, labour and reserves ?

(3) What are the purposes for which provision should be made by way of reserves and what should be the extent of such reserves ?

(4) What should be a fair return on capital employed in the industry ? Should it be at a uniform rate for all industries or should the rate vary from industry to industry and, if so, on what principles ? If the fair return is not reached in some years, should provision be made for making it up later, and, if so, how ?

(5) How should labour's share of the surplus profits be determined on a sliding scale, normally varying with production.

The Committee submitted its report on 1st September, 1948. The Committee at the outset pointed out that as a practical proposition it is not possible to devise a system in which labourer's share of profit could be determined on a sliding scale varying with production. They said, "Profits made by industry depend on many factors besides labour, and to that extent, do not bear any measurable relation to what labour does not do. An undertaking in which labour has performed its full part might fail to make any profits because of other reasons, while large profits might be made in spite of irregularities or slackness of labour. Conditions of production vary from industry to industry and often undertaking to undertaking within each industry. The productivity of labour is dependent among other things, on the nature of the equipment and the efficiency of organisation and supervision. Then again the measurement of total production in terms of common unit is a very difficult task. Even the final products of an industry or undertaking are not always uniform and easily measurable. To prescribe a norm of annual production is even difficult. Further the basic conditions in any one year may be quite different from the conditions on which the norm has been determined. The production equipment might have increased or diminished or improved or deteriorated in the meantime. The size and composition of the labour force might similarly have changed. There may be involuntary interruptions for which no one may be responsible. To compare actual production in any given year with the norm would, therefore, be extremely unscientific and unsatisfactory. To compare total production in any industry with the normal total production of that industry would be an even more unsatisfactory basis, as the number of working units in the industry might itself vary from year to year"¹

¹ Government of India, *Report of the Profit Sharing Committee*, 1948

The difficulties pointed out by the Committee in determining the labour's share of profit varying with the amount of production are real and practical. Moreover, such a profit sharing scheme will be complicated and unintelligible to workers and its working will be difficult. The Government of India wanted a a profit sharing scheme to serve as a direct incentive to production. But this is not possible. A profit sharing scheme can develop a sense of loyalty and responsibility among the workers. Towards the undertaking in which they are engaged, it can lead from sharing in the profit to sharing in proprietorship ; and then indirectly it can affect production of undertakings. But it is not likely to prove a direct incentive method of wage payment. Incentive to industrial production comes from the production bonus system of wage payment and profit sharing cannot be devised to take its place.

According to the Committee profit sharing must be viewed, in the final analysis, from three important angles, namely, profit sharing as a method of securing industrial peace and profit sharing as a step in the participation of labour in management. On the first point, the Committee held the view that by distributing the share of labour—the total share itself being arbitrarily determined—among individuals in proportion to their total earnings in a preceding period, a measure of individual incentive to labour for increased production would be provided. On the second part, the Committee was of the opinion that giving labour a share in the profits of industry apart from wages, would create psychological conditions favourable to the restoration and maintenance of industrial peace which is bound to augment production. The Committee held that it could not apply the third criterion in view of the fact that it raised political and economic issues outside its terms of reference.

Dealing with the question of fair return on capital, the Committee defined capital employed as paid up capital plus reserves (including all future allocations of services which are held for the purpose of the business). Reserves will exclude depreciation and will include only those reserves built out of profits on which taxes have been paid. In their view, depreciation should be the first charge on gross profits and reserves the first charge on net profits, i.e., gross profits minus depreciation, managing agency and taxation. The Committee on this question of fair return on capital arrived at the conclusion that a fair return on capital employed in the established industries, to which the profit sharing scheme was recommended should be that minimum return which would encourage further investment. Taking all factors into account the Committee thought that six per cent on paid up capital plus all reserves held for the purpose of the business would be a fair rate under existing circumstances. After

examination of extent of reserves in undertakings in industries selected, the Committee believed that six per cent on capital employed augmented by 50 per cent of the surplus profit would enable the concerns to declare a reasonable dividend.

In regard to labour's share in surplus profits, the Committee concluded that this should be 50% of the surplus profits of the undertaking. The individual worker's share should be in proportion to his total earnings during the preceding 12 months, minus dearness allowance and any other bonus received by him. This should be in substitution of any other form of profit sharing bonus that was being paid. If, however, the individual worker's share exceeded 25% of his basic wages, cash payments should be limited to 25% of his basic wages and the excess held on his account either in his provident fund or otherwise. It expressed itself in favour of the introduction of a scheme of profit sharing on a 50—50 basis as an experimental measure for a period of five years, in the first instance in six well-established industries: cotton, textiles, jute, steel (main producers) cement, manufacture of tyres and manufacture of cigarettes. The Committee did not plump for profit sharing on a wide scale, considering such a course tantamount to undertaking a voyage on uncharted seas.

The Committee recommended a scheme whereby profit sharing should normally be unitwise, but in certain selected cases, on an industry-cum-locality basis to be tried out in the cotton textile industry in Bombay, Ahmedabad and Sholapur. Says the report: "In these cases, the surplus profits of the units will be pooled for the purpose of ascertaining what should be the profit sharing bonus payable to labour in the industry in that locality. This bonus shall be payable, as a minimum by every unit to its labour, irrespective of its profits. But in those units where half the surplus profits (i.e., the amount due to labour in that unit) exceeds the sum required to pay the minimum bonus referred to in the previous sentence, such excess shall also be paid to the workers of that unit. In all cases, however, individual cash disbursement will be limited to 25 per cent of a worker's basic wage, and any excess will be kept in his account, provident fund or otherwise. The net effect will be that labour employed in every unit in the locality will get a minimum share calculated on the basis of the total of half the surplus profits of all units in the locality which make surplus profits. The Committee recognises that this proposal amounts to a fundamental departure from the principle of profit sharing to the extent that it involves the payment of a minimum sum by units who have either incurred a loss or made a profit less than the average profit of the industry. Except in the case of such units, however, it would be a scheme of profit sharing as ordinarily understood. The proposal moreover meets one of the employers, fundamental

objections to profit sharing localitywise basis, inasmuch as it does not involve efficient units subsidizing workers of inefficient units.¹

Thus the Committee recommended the mean between what is desirable and what is practicable in the present circumstances in Indian industry. It wisely refused to allow its deliberations to be unduly influenced by the bogey of precedents and examples, though it was not unaware (as the report shows) that profit sharing had been introduced by statute in Venezuela, Mexico, Palestine and New Zealand.

So far as the capital employed is concerned, it is wrong to include into it the whole of the reserve. Reserves are created out of the net profit and its main objective is to strengthen the financial position of the concern and to provide for general contingencies. From the business point of view the creation of reserve is indispensable and every concern must aim at creating a reserve so that as soon as possible its amount becomes equivalent to the paid up share capital of the concern. The financial position of the concern is judged by the amount of its reserves and not by its paid up capital. So creation of an adequate reserve is essential. But a profit sharing scheme is based on the social consideration that profit is the result of the joint efforts of entrepreneurs and workers. However, prudent and tactful the entrepreneurs may be, and however sound and correct their judgment may be, they will be unable to make profit if labour does not co-operate with them and assist them in materialising their schemes. If this fundamental is accepted the reserve, which is only an allocation from the net profit must be considered to belong to entrepreneurs as well as to workers. And if the entire reserve is included in the capital employed and on this capital employed a return is calculated, then the return will be only unfair, as it will amount to giving of a return to entrepreneurs on something which actually belongs to workers. Capital employed therefore should include the paid up share capital and only 50% of the accumulated general reserve.

Then there is another matter. If the entire amount of reserve is allowed to form part of the capital employed, every year this amount will go on increasing by the amount of yearly reserve allocation, and consequently the return on capital will go on increasing and the share of profit remaining for workers will go on decreasing. Thus as the stability of a concern will go on improving the share of profit to labourer will go on decreasing. This will be unfair to labour. If only 50% of the reserve is added to the paid up capital to determine the capital employed, then also the

¹ Report of the Committee on Profit Sharing, p. 11.

return on capital will go on increasing yearly, but this will be only due to the addition of the portion of reserve which should belong to capital. There is one safeguard, also, which should be provided by making an amendment to the Indian Companies Act, and that is that, no company should convert than more 50% of its accumulated reserve fund into share capital by issuing bonus shares. In the absence of such a provision, the employers may convert the entire reserve fund into share capital and the increase the employed capital of their concern.

It is, however, to be noted that loans and over-drafts from banks and debentures though they provide capital to a concern for carrying on its business, yet for calculating a fair return on capital for profit purposes they must be excluded from the term employed capital. Interest on borrowings from banks and on debentures is considered as necessary revenue expenditure and is charged to the profit and loss account before determining the net profit and therefore again no interest should be paid on them, which will occur, if they are included in the employed capital.

A Critical Estimate of the Profit Sharing Scheme

The report of the Committee on Profit sharing was not unanimous. It includes an additional note by Mr. A. D. Shroff and five notes of dissent by Mr. S. P. Jain, Prof. Radha Kamal Mukerjee, Mr. Asoka Mehta, Mr. Khandubhai K. Desai and Mr. U. B. Kainik.

Prof. Radha Kamal Mukerjee had condemned the proposed experiment and suggested instead, a formula for profit sharing correlated to output which he considers not only practicable but also imperative in the present grave crisis arising out of the diminution of industrial production in the country. His formula for the determination of the workers' share in the divisible profits lays down that $12\frac{1}{2}$ per cent of such profits may be regarded as the basic minimum to be distributed to the workers of an industrial establishment on the basis of the principle of social justice. Further, the workers' share of the profits should range from $12\frac{1}{2}$ to 50 per cent in accordance with production. For every increase per capita output over the standard output by one per cent, the additional divisible profit to the workers should be two per cent, subject to the proviso that the workers' share shall not exceed 50 per cent of the total divisible pool. The norm will have to be determined for each factory individually, 1943, 1944 and 1945 being reckoned as the base years. In the case of factories which came into existence after 1943, however, the norm shall be the same as of the representative units in each industry. According to this eminent authority, the cash distribution in any

particular year should not exceed 25 per cent of the whole, and the balance should be distributed in the form of bonus shares, which while they shall not form part of the capital, shall in every other way confer the same rights as ordinary shares. He has in his note of dissent very ably shown how these bonus share will enable the labour force to acquire a stable, continuing and expanding stake in the industrial establishment. His formula amply ensures fulfilment of the ends for which a sliding scale was devised, not the least of its merits being that it serves to relate wages to cost of living and to combat inflation. Besides it is calculated to pave the way towards the realisation of industrial democracy and the building up of a pattern of socialism suited to the Indian social tradition.

Certain critical observers have expressed the opinion that the profit sharing scheme, though admirable on paper, suffers from the defects that it is at the same time too revolutionary and too conservative. The Committee laid down that the scheme must be viewed in the final analysis, from three important angles, namely, as an incentive to production, as a method of receiving industrial peace and as a step in the participation of labour in management.

It may be pointed out that profit sharing is certainly a stepping stone to the achievement of "Industrial Democracy."

Whether profit sharing can act as an adequate incentive to increased production is much too doubtful. As has already been pointed out.

- (i) the reward has little relation to effort ;
- (ii) the reward is very remote ;
- (iii) the reward is very uncertain,
- (iv) the reward is based on collective effort and not on individual labour ;
- (v) the reward is available to the efficient as well as the inefficient, and
- (vi) The reward is, therefore, to be considered as a windfall gain or even as something to which every worker had a birth right and not as a recognition of efficient work.

Coming to another point whether industrial peace can be ensured through profit sharing we may expect better results in this respect. The workers may begin to feel that they are part owners of the undertaking and therefore the class war may be diminished. But we cannot be too sure of that. There might be conflicts over the computation of profits and the labourers might feel that the employer is throwing dust in their eyes. Labour organisations may stiffly oppose such schemes if not for any other reason, at

least to perpetuate their own hold over labour. Periods of losses and depressions may bring about considerable antagonism between labour and capital and whenever the reward is below expectation there may be a conflict.

The success of profit sharing in the ultimate end lies not to much on the extent of gains that it can provide to workers, but on the spirit of co-operation which it can inculcate among workers. It has been argued on the part of employers that since industrial profits are declining at present it is not an opportune time for this experiment.

The Central Advisory Council, which considered this report, also could not arrive at any agreement. The matter came up again and again at the meetings of the joint consultative Board in August and September, 1957 as also in June, 1952. Mr. Gulzarilal Nanda, the Chairman of this Board which was set up by the Industries Development Committee felt that in view of the complicated nature of the problems of bonus and profit sharing, there was a need to set up norms or standard formula with the assistance of experts from India as well as from the U. S. A., the U. K., Germany and the I. L. O. The Planning Commission in the First Five Year Plan had also pointed out that the question of profit sharing and bonuses needs expert study, and the payment of bonuses in cash should be restricted and the balance should go towards the workers' savings.

However, since the profit sharing experiment has not yet been launched no final verdict can be given on the wisdom of the new proposal. The experiments on profit sharing in foreign countries are rather discouraging. As Patterson points out, "In both Great Britain and the United States such schemes have shown a high rate of mortality". The McGraw-Hill Digest of November 1946 surveying the results of profit sharing in U. S. A. points out, profit sharing has been abandoned by 61% of the 161 firms surveyed by National Industrial Conference Board. More than 25% were dropped as the result of employers' or employees' dissatisfactions. Some 36% because there were no profits to share or the company had gone out of business or changed hands. Dissatisfaction arose mostly from employees, lack of understanding of the principles involved and their inability to comprehend the influence of the business cycle".

But in India, under the present circumstances the experiment deserves a fair trial. The country is suffering from acute industrial unrest and there is a great need for bringing about peace in industry. That can be done only if labour is made an equal partner with entrepreneur-capitalist. The time has come, when capitalists should willingly art with a part of their earnings in favour of their

poor comrades in industry. If they do not do it willingly, the social forces may compel them to part with the whole.

(ii) Collective Bargaining

Collective bargaining is a process of discussion and negotiation between two parties, one or both of whom is a group of persons acting in concert. The resulting bargain is an understanding as to the terms or conditions under which a continuing service is to be performed. More specifically "collective bargaining is the procedure by which an employer or employers and a group of employees agree upon the conditions of work" The institution is both a device used by wage workers to safeguard their interests and an instrument of industrial organisation.

The actual conduct of collective bargaining only approximates the norm of free agreement between equally interested and equally powerful parties. The interests of the two groups are unlike, the concern of one being with an expense of production, the other with the means of livelihood. The organisations are unlike, the labourers being associates for the specific purpose of bargaining, the employers being organised for production and profit making.

The process of collective bargaining results, not in a labour contract, but in a trade agreement. This imposes no obligation upon the employer to offer or upon the labourers to accept work ; it guarantees neither to the employer's workmen nor to the labourer's job. It is nothing more than a statement of the conditions upon which such work as is offered and accepted is to be done.

It is through the trade agreement, which is subsumed in the labour contract that collective bargaining becomes an agency of industrial order. The trade agreement, which specifies how job and workmen are to be brought together in production like a creed or a code, is of slow and tangled growth, the repetitious process of bargaining is the procedure by which the scheme of employment relations is built up and maintained. The general understanding is primarily concerned with wage rates, it is easily extended to the times and methods of wage payment, hours of labour, compensation for overtime, fines for infractions of rules, allowances for dead work, the protection of life and limb and hiring and firing. It may lay down the conditions of work in great detail, incorporate a code of working rules or specify technical practices, ways of handling materials, methods of checking results and standards of performance to test the competence of workmen, The constructive use of collective bargaining and the enforcement of trade agreements demand strong and continuing organisations and the faithful performance of obligations on both sides.

Collective Bargaining in India

Collective bargaining has not made much progress in India. There are two important reasons for it. *Firstly*, the managements contend that it is the presence of a multiplicity of unions of workers with various political affiliations, it is difficult to start negotiations with particular unions as the negotiations may themselves constitute a starting point for a dispute in the undertaking. And even if an agreement is reached in such a situation it is difficult to enforce it for all workers as the members of the non-negotiating unions may be opposed to it for the simple reason that they had no hand in its conclusion.

Secondly, on the other hand, the representatives of workers' union advance the argument that non-recognition of unions is mainly responsible for the slow progress of trade unionism and the absence of collective bargaining. The second reason given by them is that managements are either unwilling to negotiate or if they do start negotiations the right spirit is lacking.

With the commencement of the Second Five Year Plan period, India has entered another and bigger phase of industrialisation. For economic development and progress of the Second Five Year Plan in our country, internal peace is essential. All Plans and Schemes would end in fiasco, in the absence of such a peace. Similarly, for planned development in an undertaking or an industry industrial peace is indispensable. Indian industry is, however, faced with some controversial problems. The foremost among these is that of modernisation. Since modernisation is associated in workers' minds with displacements in the context of the unemployment problem in the country, it invites hostility. But the redeeming feature of the Indian situation is that there is vast scope for industrial expansion. In a bid to raise productivity, modernisation cannot be ruled out altogether as Indian industry cannot compete foreign markets if it does not follow methods of production practised in industrially advanced countries.

From a union's standpoint, the object of collective bargaining is to prevent unilateral action by an employer. This is accomplished by requiring him to sign a contract fitting conditions of employment for a specified period and establishing a procedure for handling disputed issues arising during the period. Collective bargaining is, thus an employer regulating device, a method of guaranteeing certain rights and immunities to the worker by limiting the employer's freedom of action.

Moreover in order to solve the various problems at the level of the undertaking and of industry, managements, and workers, organisations have to come together. Labour legislation and the

enforcement machinery can only provide the setting in which industry may function. The solution of common problems can come from the parties directly concerned. "In this context, collective agreements provide the climate for smooth progress. The agreements spell out the working relationship between employers' and workers' organisations in which a synthesis between the demands for one side and concessions from the other can be given practical shape. That they are particularly suited to Indian conditions at the present moment when India needs industrial peace, no one would deny."¹

International Background²

The scope and coverage of collective bargaining have extended almost everywhere. It is estimated that the conditions of work of one-third of the non-agricultural labour force in the United States are determined in this way. Over the past 75 years, the American labour movement has consistently viewed rising productivity as a source of improvement in the wage-earner's standard of living, with these improvements to be obtained principally through the process of collective bargaining, that in Switzerland about half the nation's labour force is covered by collective agreements, and that at least half the industrial workers of Austria, Belgium, the Federal Republic of Germany, Luxembourg, the Scandinavian countries are also covered by such agreement. The practice of collective bargaining has also spread to larger numbers of workers in the less developed countries, though the proportion covered is still low in all of them. In the U. S. S. R. and certain countries of Eastern Europe collective contracts at the level of undertaking extend to the vast majority of the workers.

This important tendency towards collective bargaining reflects in most countries, the growing maturity of trade union movements and their belief that that collective agreements provide an effective and flexible means of adjusting social progress to technical and economic progress and of defining the respective rights and obligations of management and labour over a given period of time. It also reflects a changing outlook on the part of employers, a greater willingness to negotiate with the workers on a collective basis and to concede the advantages of such a system as a means of fixing objectives and working conditions.

Issues dealt with through Collective Bargaining

Once the principle of collective bargaining is accepted, it is applied for the solution of many kinds of problems which offer

1 I. L. O., *Recent Development in Certain Aspect of Indian Economy*, III, 19:7 p. 104.

2 The information for this is drawn from the Report of the Director General to the 38th session of the International Conference and other I. L. O. Sources.

to the parties opportunities of reaching a compromise through mutual concessions. In addition to wages, hours of work and paid holidays (which almost always constitute the essential area of collective bargaining) management and the trade unions sometimes co-operate in developing job evaluation systems which would facilitate the fixing of wage rates in the undertaking for the different categories of workers on the basis of duties performed.

A model collective agreement for the chemical industries in the Federal Republic of Germany concluded on 2nd February, 1953, which covers some 300,000 workers in the chemical industries, includes the following points of agreement :—

- (i) Normal hours of work ;
- (ii) overtime night work, and work of Sundays and public holidays ;
- (iii) overtime rates ;
- (iv) breaches to be counted in assessing working hours ;
- (v) working hours of staff required to standby ; short time
- (vi) employment injuries ;
- (vii) wages ;
- (viii) wage categories ;
- (ia) bonus for dangerous or unhealthy work ;
- (x) payment by results ;
- (ix) holidays with pay ;
- (xii) termination of contracts of employment ; and Conciliation and Arbitration Boards, functions, procedures.

Income and employment security are also dealt with in a number of collective agreements. With regard to dismissals, collective agreements often provide (especially in U. S. A., Italy and Sweden) for consultation with workers' representatives, either prior to introduction of new production methods or prior to collective dismissals effected for economic considerations.

In U. S. A. and Canada, collective agreements are often concluded at the level of the undertaking. In Western Europe they are generally included between employers' associations and trade union federations and extend to a particular branch of activity over a given geographic area national or local. In some countries like Belgium, France, Luxembourg and Switzerland the legislation provides for the possibility of extending the application of their principles to third parties.

Central Agreements

"The two most important agreements concluded in India are the (i) the Delhi Agreement of 17th February, 1951, and (ii) the Bonus Agreement of January, 1956.

1. The Delhi Agreement

This agreement was concluded at a conference of the representatives of labour and management and it related to rationalisation and allied matters. The main points on which agreement was reached are :—

(i) Musters should be standardised, and workloads fixed on the basis of technical investigations carried out by experts selected by the management and labour. Side by side working conditions should be standardised. In the case of new machinery, a period of trial may be necessary before standardisation is effected.

(ii) Wherever rationalisation is contemplated, fresh recruitment should be stopped and vacancies due to death and retirement should not be refilled.

(iii) Surplus labour should be offered work in other departments wherever possible without causing a break in service and without bringing down their emoluments as far as possible.

(iv) Having regard to the position regarding raw materials, the state of the capital goods and the demand for the products of an industry, wherever the conditions of the industry permit, new machinery should be installed.

(v) Gratuities should be offered as inducement to workers to retire voluntarily.

(vi) Retrenchment should be effected from amongst persons who have been freshly employed.

(vii) Workers thrown out of employment as a result of rationalisation should be offered facilities for retraining for alternative occupations. The period of such training may extend up to 9 months. A training scheme should be jointly worked out by the Government employers and workers.

(viii) The maintenance of the workers during the training period should be the responsibility of the management whereas the cost of training should be borne by the Government.

(ix) Full use should be made of the possibilities of utilising the surplus labour in various projects undertaken by the Government.

(x) Incentives for sharing the gains of rationalisation through higher wages and a better standard of living should be provided. Where such gains are made through the additional efforts of the workers, they should receive a share in the resulting benefit, most of which should pass to workers where wages are below the living wage. Where there has been some capital investment by the management this should be taken into account in distributing the worker's share. The object is to facilitate the worker's attaining a living wage standard through acceptance of rationalisation."

2 Bonus Agreement for Plantation Workers

This agreement was reached in Delhi in January, 1956, between the representatives of the Indian Tea Association, and the Indian Tea Planters' Association, on the one hand, and the Hind Mazdoor Sabha and the I. N. T. U. C., on the other, on the payment of bonus to about a million plantation workers.

The agreement related to bonus for the years 1953 to 1956. For the years 1953 and 1954, the following lump sum payments were to be made to each adult male and female worker who had completed not less than 240 and 175 days' work respectively in 1954 :—

	Under 300 acres	
	Rs.	Rs.
Assam Zone one	130	65
Do. two	130	65
Cachar		32-8-0
Darjeeling		27-8-0
Dooars		65
Teraí		50
Tripura		39-8-0

Workers who had put in work for less number of days were to get proportionately lesser amount as bonus. Half the rate was applicable in the case of children on the basis of 175 days' work in a year.

It was also provided that no bonus was to be paid if the company made no profit in 1954. Two-thirds of the bonus amount was payable before 29th February, 1956, and the balance before the end of 1956, preferably in the form of National Savings Certificate.

To determine the bonus for 1955 and 1956, it was provided that the companies were to be selected in each area by the drawing of lots, and the bonus payable would bear to the figures agreed upon for the years 1953 and 1954 the same proportion as

the profits of 1955 and 1956 bear to the profits of the same Companies in 1954.”¹

Agreements in Industries

On the 27th June, 1955, the Textile Labour Association and the Ahmedabad Millowners' Association entered into two agreements for laying down the procedure for the grant of bonus and voluntary settlement of industrial disputes. They remained in force up to 31st December, 1957. Under the Bombay Industrial Relations Act, 1946, the parties were entitled to terminate the agreement after a period of one year but both the parties had agreed not to exercise their right in so far as the agreements relating to bonus was concerned. As regards the second agreement it can be revoked earlier by any of the parties by giving six months' notice. The following are the salient features of the agreements :—

Bonus. The agreement applies to all the local member mills of the Association and relates to bonus claims in respect of year 1953 to 1957 (both inclusive). The claims relating to bonus are to be determined on the basis of the working result of the concern as disclosed in the balance sheet and profit and loss account for the year adopted by the company. The agreement provides that bonus would be payable only out of an “avoidable surplus of profit” after making provision for all the prior charges, e.g., statutory depreciation and development rebate, taxes, reserves for rehabilitation, replacement and modernisation of block including a fair return on paid up capital. The fair return is taken as laid down in the Full Bench formula of the Labour Appellate Tribunal, namely, at 6% on paid up capital in cash or otherwise including bonus shares and on reserves employed as working capital (at 2 per cent). The bonus will be paid to the employees out of available surplus at a rate not less than 4.8 per cent and not more than 15 per cent of the basic wages earned during the year in question. The actual payment of bonus will be regulated as follows :—

(1) In any year a mill has an available surplus of profit, which is adequate for granting bonus at a rate higher than the ceiling of 25 per cent and it pays the maximum, it will set aside a part of the residue not exceeding 25 per cent of the basic wage to “reserve” for bonus for “set on” adjustment in subsequent years. At no time the reserve is to exceed an amount equivalent to 25 per cent of the basic wages earned during the year. This reserve would be utilised for making up the deficit in any subse-

¹ Adapted from I. L. O's *Recent Developments in Certain Aspects of Indian Economy*, III, pp. 109-112.

quent year when the profits are inadequate to pay bonus as provided in the agreement.

(2) A mill whose profit is not adequate to provide for all prior charges or has suffered a loss will pay a minimum bonus of 4·8 per cent of the basic wages earned without creating a precedent. Such a mill will be entitled to "set off" the amount so paid against the amount of bonus that will be payable in subsequent years.

(3) If the available surplus profit of a mill in a particular year is adequate to grant bonus at a rate lower than the ceiling, the quantum of bonus will be fixed in such a manner that there will remain with the mill at least Rs. 10,000 after granting bonus. This sum is not to be mixed up with the amount "set on."

(4) If in respect of any year, a mill has available surplus of profits which can pay bonus at a rate lower than the minimum rate fixed under the agreement and it pays bonus at the minimum rate, it will be entitled to "set off" the excess amount thus paid by it to make up the minimum bonus against the amount of bonus that would be payable in subsequent years in the following manner :—If in a subsequent year, the available surplus of profits of the mill is adequate to grant bonus at the maximum rate, the mill will first take out of the amount thus payable as bonus the "set off" amount carried over from a previous year and will distribute the remaining amount as bonus. If in a subsequent year the available surplus of profits is adequate only to grant bonus at a rate lower than the maximum, the mill will first set aside out of the available surplus at least Rs. 10,000 and out of the balance will take out the "set off" amount carried over from a previous year.

The agreement provides that the amount of reserve for bonus set aside for "set-on" and similar unadjusted amount of "set-off" shall lapse at the termination of the agreement in 1957. The two Associations are to jointly determine the available surplus of profit and fix the quantum of bonus to be distributed in the case of each individual mill. If there is any difference of opinion between the parties the matter is to be referred to the President of the Labour Appellate Tribunal, and if he is not available to an umpire agreed under the second agreement or in his absence to a person mutually agreed upon and his decision will be binding. The agreement also prescribes the time within which payment is to be made and the manner in which it will be distributed among workers.

Settlement of Disputes

The second agreement which is in the nature of a submission under section 66 (1) of the Bombay Industrial Relations Act provides that all future industrial disputes, except those relating to bonus, between the local members of mills of the Ahmedabad Millowners' Association and the Textile Labour Association will be settled without going to the court by mutual negotiations failing which by arbitration. Under the agreement, each party is to constitute a panel of arbitrators and also to jointly nominate a panel of umpires consisting of not less than two and not more than five independent persons. Whenever there is any industrial dispute each party is to nominate its own arbitrator from the panel and the two arbitrators are to form a Board of Arbitration. This Board is required to select an umpire out of the panel or from outsiders so that in case of "difference of opinion between the two Arbitrators, it shall refer their individual decisions to him for giving his Award whose decision would be final and binding."

Agreement in the Bombay Textile Industry

In Bombay, a long drawn out dispute on the question of bonus has been settled by an agreement between the Millowners' Association and the Rashtriya Mill Mazdoor Sangh, Bombay. This agreement follows generally the Ahmedabad model. The Industrial court had since 1949 declared some mills in Bombay as uneconomic units and exempted them from payment of bonus. The agreement provides that these units would also have to pay bonus for at least 15 days for 1952.

The agreement entitles nearly 2,50,000 textile workers of Bombay to get bonus ranging from 15 days to three months' basic wage for every year from 1952 to 1957. The Millowners' Association has also agreed to make an outright payment of Rs. 50 lakhs towards industrial housing which will enable 4 000 tenements to be built.

Agreement between the Tata Iron and Steel Company and the Tata Workers' Union

An agreement to establish and maintain orderly and cordial relations between the company and the union so as to promote the interests of the employees and the efficient operation of the company's business was entered into between the Tata Iron and Steel Company Ltd., Jamshedpur and the Tata Workers' Union on 3th January, 1956. The main provisions of this agreement which

will remain in force for three years in the first instance are as follows :—

Mutual Security. To further the objectives of goodwill and co-operation, the company and the union have given to each other certain assurances for their mutual security. For example, the company has assured that it will continue to recognise the Tata Workers Union as the sole bargaining agent of employees at Jamshedpur in the union sphere. It has also agreed, in principle to a union membership security system and to collection of union subscription through the pay roll in respect of employees other than supervisory staff. The union for its part has recognised the right of the company to introduce new or improved methods or equipment, to decide the number and location of plants, the nature of equipment or machinery, etc., subject to the condition that it will be consulted where the employees' interests are adversely affected. The union has recognised the right of the company ; (i) to hire, transfer, promote or discipline employees, following the normal procedure, (ii) to fix the number of men required for the normal operation of a section or department and to eliminate, change or consolidate jobs, sections, departments, or divisions provided that where the employees' interests are adversely affected the union will be consulted before a decision is taken.

Closes Association of Employees with Management. The company has decided to associate work employees with management in the working of the industry and the company and the union will discuss and devise at an early date ways and means of progressively achieving that objective at appropriate level and by gradual stages.

Productivity. The company has assured the union that (i) there will be no retrenchment of existing employees, (ii) the employees required for jobs other than those in which they are at present employed will wherever necessary be trained for the specific jobs, (iii) if the employees are transferred or put under training they will be guaranteed their present average earnings under the agreement. The fixation of the number of men required for the normal operation of each existing section or department as referred earlier shall be carried out and completed within a period of one year from the date of agreement. In the event of disagreement about such number the matter will be referred to independent experts for arbitration and if the parties fail to agree upon the appointment of independent experts the matter will be decided by an arbitrator appointed by the Government of India and his decision will be binding to both the parties.

Job description, Job evaluation and Wage structure. As a scientific approach to labour productivity the company and the union have agreed to a programme of job evaluation as the basis of simplified and rational wage structure in future. The work of job evaluation will be done by a joint committee composed of equal number of representatives of the union and the company with an independent expert as chairman.

Revision of Wages and Gratuity. Pending job evaluation the company has agreed to give two flat *ad-hoc* increases—one on 1st January, 1956, and the other on 1st January, 1957, at the rate of annas 2 per day to those daily rated workers who get up to Rs. 3 per day and at the rate of Rs. 3-4 per month to all clerical employees getting up to Rs. 140 per month and all monthly rated workers getting up to Rs. 75 per month. The agreement provides for inclusion of dearness allowance proper in the calculation of gratuity payment. This benefit is given only to those employees in Jamshedpur whose basic salary or wages do not exceed Rs. 500 p. m.

The agreement further stipulates that after the completion of the expansion of the company's plant and of the job evaluation programme, the company and the union agree to negotiate revised wages and emoluments separately for (1) workers in the plant (2) supervisory staff (3) employees outside the works.

Construction of Quarters. The company has agreed to construct 300 one-room quarters and 1,700 two-rooms quarters by 31st March 1959, subject to the satisfactory conclusion of land acquisition proceedings now pending. Water supply inside the houses has also been promised in return for a reasonable charge in the shape of increased rent.

Promotions. The company has agreed that promotions to vacancies in the supervisory and non-supervisory staff will be made whenever possible internally.

Grievance Procedure, Works Committees, Discipline, etc. It has been agreed that a grievance procedure formulated in consultation with the unions should be introduced in all departments and shall be strictly followed. Intervention at the top union and management level will take place only in exceptional cases.

The above experiments speak much for the reasonableness on the part of managements and the sense of responsibility on the side of the labour. A time is bound to come, when India will rank as one of the leading industrial countries of the world. New units now in industry should start not only with latest plants but also with the latest attitudes and ideas in industrial relations. In

this sphere collective agreements have played a dominant part in industrially advanced countries. The recent agreements have given a highly significant lead, which, it is hoped will be followed by managements and unions all over India.

In India in the textile industry, the future trend is for the conclusion of agreements at the level of industry. In other cases, the agreements are at the level of undertaking. The reason for this is that the textile industry is the oldest manufacturing industry in the country and it is concentrated in certain localities. Moreover, the millowners and workers are also organised on an industry-wise basis.

CHAPTER XVII

LABOUR LEGISLATION IN INDIA

In all industrial countries of the world it has been found necessary to pass laws for the purpose of improving the conditions of labour and avoiding the evils of the factory system.

"The beginnings of labour legislation in India go back to the thirties of the last century, when, immediately after the abolition of slavery, various British colonies turned to India as a source of cheap labour, and considerable numbers of Indians began to emigrate as labourers under contracts of various types. As a result the Government of India found it necessary to legislate for the regulation of the recruitment, forwarding and employment of Indian emigrants under the indenture system, and although this legislation applied only to emigration to foreign countries, it had a great influence upon the development of labour legislation within India, especially in connection with the recruitment, forwarding and employment of tea garden labourers in Assam. No need was then felt for a uniform policy, in labour legislation covering all industries; in recent years, although the principal branches of organized industry are still regulated by separate legislative measures, the tendency has been to draft legislation in accordance with uniform general principles, partly to take account of the Conventions of the International Organization which have either been ratified or generally approved in India Under the Constitution of India which was in force up to the end of the period covered by this report, *i.e.*, 31st March, 1937, the Government of India had authority to initiate legislative and administrative measures relating to labour for the whole of British India, but Provincial Governments were largely entrusted with the administration of central legislation and could, with the sanction of the Governor-General-in Council, also undertake the enactment of provincial labour legislation."¹

Legislation under India Act of 1935

Under the constitutional provisions of the Government of India Act, 1935, there was a demarcation between provincial and Central functions regarding legislation as well as administration. Briefly, the regulation of labour and safety in mines and oilfields, on the federal railways and in major parts as also interprovincial migration were Central subjects. But the following were subjects

¹ I. L. O., *Industrial Labour in India*, 1938, pp. 62-63.

of concurrent legislative jurisdiction : "factories ; welfare of labour ; conditions of labour ; provident fund ; employers' liability and workmen's compensation ; health insurance ; including invalidity pension ; old age pensions ; unemployment insurance, trade unions ; industrial and labour disputes ; enquiries and statistics for the purpose of any other matters."

The Central legislature and the provincial legislature both had power to make laws with respect to any of these matters of concurrent jurisdiction and the central executive could give directions to the provinces for carrying into execution central laws on these subjects.

Legislation during Second World War

Following the outbreak of the war, and more particularly of the hostilities in the Pacific in December, 1941, numerous emergency measures had to be taken with the object of utilising country's vast resources, human and material, to the maximum advantage for the prosecution of the war. The more important of these measures in the field of labour legislation were¹ :—

- (i) The promulgation of the National Service (Technical Personnel) Ordinance in 1940, to control the employment and distribution of technical personnel (including managerial staff, supervisory staff, and skilled and semi-skilled employees).
- (ii) The Essential Services (Maintenance) Ordinance, 1941 to make provision for the maintenance of certain essential services during the war-time emergency.
- (iii) The relaxation, for the duration of the war-time emergency, of the ban (imposed in 1937) on the employment of women in underground work in coal mines.
- (iv) The relaxation in factories and railways of the maximum limit on hours of work set by the provisions of the Factories Act and the hours of Employment Regulations.
- (v) The enactment in 1943 of the War Injuries (Compensation Insurance) Act with the object of imposing on industrial employers an obligation to pay compensation in respect of war injuries to workers in the employ, and the introduction in 1942 of a war injuries

¹ I. L. O. *Wartime Labour Conditions and Reconstruction Planning in India* 1946, pp. 45-55 ; and I. L. O., *India Branch, Labour Legislation in India* 1937-38, p. 72.

scheme providing for the grant of relief to gainfully occupied persons over the age of 15.

- (vi) The framing of the new regulation under the Defence of India Rules (Rule 81A) empowering the Government, to prohibit strikes or lockouts, to refer any dispute for conciliation or adjudication, to require employers to observe such terms and conditions of employment as might be specified and to enforce the decision of adjudicators.

All these war time statutes and regulations, with the exception of the last, have either been withdrawn or have ceased to have any practical effect. The main provisions of the Defence of India Rules 81A, were incorporated in the Industrial Disputes Act, 1947.

However, the war had left a permanent mark on the evolution of labour policy in India—that of joint consultation between Governments, employers and workers on matters of all-India importance. The Tripartite Labour Organisation set up in 1942 to promote uniformity in labour legislation to formulate a procedure for the settlement of industrial disputes and to serve as a platform for discussion of all matters of all-India importance, has taken firm root. The principle of tripartite collaboration has been extended to individual industries, and tripartite Industrial Committees have been set up for the coal, textile, jute, plantation, cement and tanning and leather goods industries.

Legislation after Independence

The complete transfer of power in India on 15 August, 1947, to an Independent Government, had naturally an effect in the field of labour legislation. Since then significant changes have taken place in labour legislation in the country. Labour laws adopted by the Centre, apply to all territories in India. Among the Acts so applicable are the Indian Ports Act, 1908 ; the Indian Mines Act, 1923 ; the Indian Trade Unions Act, 1926 ; the Tea Districts Emigration Labour Act, 1932 ; the Children Act, 1933 ; the Indian Dock Labourers Act, 1934 ; the Payment of Wages Act, 1936 ; the Coal Mines Safety Act, 1939 ; the Mines Maternity Benefit Act, 1941 ; the Weekly Holidays Act, 1942 ; the Industrial Statistics Act, 1942 ; the Industrial Employment (Standing Orders) Act, 1946 ; the Mica Mines Labour Welfare Fund Act, 1946 ; the Coal Mines Labour-Welfare Fund Act, 1947 ; the Industrial Disputes Act, 1947 ; the Dock Workers (Regulation of Employment) Act, 1948 ; the Minimum Wages Act, 1948 ; the Factories Act, 1948 ; the Industrial Disputes Act, (Banking and Insurance) Act, 1949.

The New Constitution of India, which came into force on 26th January, 1950, retains the same division of powers between the Centre (Union) and the Provinces (States) which was adopted under the Government of India Act, 1935. The Union Parliament has the exclusive right to legislate. They include participation in international conference, associations and other bodies and implementation of decisions made thereat; regulation of labour and safety in mines and oil-fields; industrial disputes concerning Union employees; and inter-state migration.

The State legislatures have the exclusive right to enact legislation on the subjects in the State List.

With regard to the subjects specified in the Concurrent List, both Parliament and the State legislatures have the right to make laws. But when the provisions of the Act passed by the Union conflict with those of an Act passed by a State, the former prevails over the latter. Among the subjects in the Concurrent List are :

- (i) trade unions, industrial and labour disputes ;
- (ii) welfare of labour including conditions of work, provident funds, employers' liability, workmen's compensation, invalidity and old age pensions and maternity benefits ;
- (iii) social security and social insurance ; employment and unemployment ;
- (iv) Vocational and technical training of labour ;
- (v) Economic and social planning ; and
- (vi) factories.

Labour Legislation—a Classification

The labour laws that now operate in India may be classified under the following heads :—

I. Legislations in respect of working and employment conditions covers these

- (i) The Indian Factories Act, 1934 and as amended by Acts of 1940, 1941, 1944, 1945, 1946 and 1947. The whole of this legislation was recast in a new Act adopted in 1948. It was again amended in 1949, 1950, 1951 and 1954.
- (ii) The Employment of Children Act, 1938, as amended in 1939, 1948, 1949, 1950 and 1953.
- iii) Shops and Commercial Establishment Act, 1953.

- (iv) The Weekly Holidays Act, 1941, as amended in 1951.
- (v) The Plantation Labour Act, 1951.
- (vi) Indian Merchant Shipping Act, 1923 and as amended in 1949, 1950 and 1951.
- (vii) The Children (Pledging of Labour) Act, 1933 and as amended in 1950 and 1951.
- (viii) The Indian Mines Act, 1923, as amended in 1935, 1937 and 1952.
- (ix) The District Emigrants Labour Act, 1932, as amended in 1938, 1948, 1950 and 1951.
- (x) The Indian Railways (Amendment) Act, 1930, again amended in 1950 and 1951.
- (xi) Railway Servants Hours of Employment Act, 1931 as amended in 1951.
- (xii) The Indian Dock Labourers Act, 1934 as amended in 1948 and 1951.
- (xiii) Motor Vehicles Act of 1939, and as amended in 1943, 1950 and 1951.

. Legislation in respect of Workers' Organizations and industrial disputes covers

- (i) The Trade Unions Act, 1926 as amended in 1950 and 1951.
- (ii) Industrial Employment (Standing Orders) Act, 1946, as amended in 1950 and 1951.

I. Legislation in respect of Wages and Welfare and Protection Measures covers

- (i) Workmen's Compensation Act, 1923, as amended in 1925, 1933, 1937, 1938, 1939, 1942, 1946, 1948, 1950 and 1951.
- (ii) Employees' States Insurance Act, 1948, as amended in 1950 and 1951.
- (iii) Payment of Wages Act, 1936 and as amended in 1937, 1940, 1950 and 1951.
- (iv) The Mines Maternity Benefit Act, 1941, as amended in 1943, 1945, 1948 and 1951.

IV. Legislation in respect of Employer-employee relationship covers

- (i) The Trade Disputes Act, 1929, as amended in 1938 and replaced by the Industrial Disputes Act, 1947, as amended in 1948, 1949, 1950, and 1951, 1952, 1953 and 1956.
- (ii) Industrial Disputes (Appellate Tribunal) Act, 1950, as amended in 1954.

We will, however, discuss Labour Legislation under the following heads :—

- (1) Factory Legislation.
- (2) Plantation Legislation.
- (3) Mining Legislation.
- (4) Transport Legislation.
- (5) Seamen's Legislation
- (6) Legislation relating to Workers in Shops and Commercial Establishment.

1. Factory Legislation

State regulation of the conditions of employment in factories in India started only in the year 1881 when the first Indian Factories Act was passed. Prior to this enactment the policy of the State towards labour matters was virtually that of *Laissez-Faire*. Hours of work in most of the factories were from sunrise to sunset. Large numbers of women and children were employed. Workers enjoyed neither periodical nor weekly holidays. As a result of the awakening of the public conscience both in India and the United Kingdom in 1875 a Factory Commission was appointed by the Government of Bombay to enquire into the conditions of the operatives in the Bombay factories and the necessity or otherwise for the passing of a Factory Act".¹

Factories Act of 1881

The Commission pointed out the prevalence of various abuses but on the question of legislation there was no agreement among its members. Various States of industrial importance which were consulted by the Government of India also did not favour the enactment of legislation. The Government of India, however, decided to proceed with all-India legislation. This decision was vehemently opposed by several sections of public

¹ The information hereafter is from *Indian Factory Legislation. A Historical Survey and Indian Factory Law Administration* by A. G. Clow.

opinion. Nevertheless, after a number of Bills had been drafted and considered the first Act was passed in 1881.

The Act represented a compromise between the radical and conservative shades of public opinion. It applied only to those factories which employed 100 or more persons and used mechanical power, defined a 'child' as any person below the age of 12 and prohibited the employment of children below the age of 7. The hours of work of children between the age of 7 and 12 were fixed at nine and provision was made for rest, intervals and holidays. Persons above 12 were treated as adults and except for certain provisions relating to health and safety there was little regulation of their conditions of work.

Factory Act of 1891

The inadequacy of the provisions of the Act, however, led the Government of India to consider proposals for its amendment almost immediately after it was put on the statute book. The Government of Bombay appointed a commission in 1884 to examine the question and to make recommendations. The appointment of this commission was followed by the appointment of another commission by the Government of India in 1890. Largely on the basis of the recommendations of the commission a new Factories Act was passed in 1891. The Act defined a 'factory' as any premises in which 50 or more persons were employed and empowered Provincial Government to extend its operation to factories employing 20 or more persons; provided for a compulsory stoppage of work for half an hour during the middle of the day and for weekly holidays, limited the hours of work for women to 11 per day and fixed the minimum age of employment for children at 9 and prescribed the working hours of children between 9 and 14 to a maximum of 7 hours a day and to daylight. This Act also contained elaborate provisions for inspection and penalties.

The Act of 1911

During the next 20 years in which the Act remained in force, certain new factors made their appearance and brought about a considerable change in Indian industrial conditions. The introduction of electric light and boom in the cotton mill industry in 1904 led to the working of long hours. Some of the mills in Bombay even worked for 15 hours in a day. This led to a demand for enquiry and in 1906 a Preliminary Committee was appointed to investigate the existence of abuses. The report of this Committee pointed out the necessity of a more detailed and a wider enquiry. The Factory Labour Commission was accordingly appointed in 1907 to consider the whole question of factory labour. On the basis of the recommendations of the Commission a Bill was introduced in 1909 which was passed into an Act in 1911.

The main features of the Act of 1911 were as follows:—

- (i) It limits for the first time the hours of work of adult males in textiles mills to 12 per day.
- (ii) Children's hours in textile mills were reduced to 6 per day and more stringent measures for inspection and certification were provided.
- (iii) It prohibited the employment of women and children in certain dangerous processes and between the hours of 7 P. M. and 5. 30 A. M.

Factory Act of 1922

At the conclusion of the first World War there was a rising consciousness among the working classes which resulted in considerable industrial unrest in 1919. At about the same time International Labour Organisation which was set up by the peace treaty began to have its influence on the Indian scene. The draft conventions and recommendations adopted by the International Labour Conference and the pressure of public opinion necessitated a revision of Labour Legislation. In 1922 therefore a revised and more comprehensive Act was passed. The Act applied to all factories which employed 20 or more persons and which used mechanical power. Provincial Governments were empowered to extend the operation of the Act to any industrial undertaking wherein 10 or more persons were employed. Persons below the age of 15 were now treated as children and their hours of work were limited to 6 in the day with a rest interval of half an hour after 5½ hours of work. The minimum age for the employment of children was also raised for 9 to 12 and no child could be admitted to employment unless a medical certificate was produced. The working hours of adults were limited to 11 hours a day and to 60 hours in any one week and rest interval was increased for half an hour to one hour. In addition to making various provisions relating to health and safety the Act for the first time provided that overtime work should be paid at one and a quarter times of the normal rates of pay.¹

Subsequent Acts

† For the next 12 years no important change was introduced in the Act though certain modifications were made by the Amending Act of 1923, 1926, 1931, In 1929 the Royal Commission on Labour was appointed with wide terms of reference. The report which was published in 1931 reviewed the whole existing field of Indian Labour Legislation and made a large number of recommendations. Largely on the basis of the recommendations of the Commission a

1 I. L. O. *Industrial Labour in India*, pp. 72-73.

Bill was framed by the Government of India which was passed into an Act in 1934. According to this Act the factories were divided into two classes, seasonal and perennial. Under the seasonal factories were put those factories which worked for less than 180 days in a year, while the perennial factories included all those establishments which worked for more than 6 months in a year. The maximum hours of work for adults in perennial factories were fixed at 10 per day and 54 per week, while in the seasonal factories the limit was fixed at 11 per day and 60 per week.

The principle of 'spreading over' was introduced for the first time and number of consecutive hours of work was fixed at 13 for adults and $6\frac{1}{2}$ for children. Overtime was required to be paid at the rate of $1\frac{1}{2}$ times of the ordinary wages. The Act also created a new class of workmen to be called adolescents and placed all persons between 15 and 17 years in it. The adolescents were to be treated as children unless medically certified to be fit for adult work. The definition of the factory remained the same as that of 1922. A number of provisions about the welfare activities, fencing of machineries, safety devices, etc., were also made. The administration of the Act was made a responsibility of the Provincial Government who appointed chief inspectors of factories and inspectors for the purpose.

Amendment of the Factory Act in 1946

The Act of 1934 was amended not less than seven times in 1936, 1940, 1941, 1944, 1945, 1946 and 1947 and finally was replaced by the Factories Act of 1948. The amendment in 1946 was an important one. The seventh Labour Conference held in November, 1945 accepted the principle of 48 hours a week. With the grounds thus prepared the Government passed a factory Act in 1946, according to which the hours of work in perennial factories were reduced to 48 per week and 9 per day and in seasonal factories to 54 per week and 10 per day as maximum. The spread out was reduced for 13 hours to $10\frac{1}{2}$ hours in perennial and to $11\frac{1}{2}$ hours in seasonal factories.

The Factories Act of 1948

The experience of the working of the 1934 Act revealed a number of defects which hampered effective administration. Moreover, the provisions for the safety, health and welfare of the workers were found to be inadequate and unsatisfactory, and such protection as was provided by the Act did not extend to a large mass of workers employed in small work places. It was therefore felt that the radical overhand of the existing legislation was called for without delay. Accordingly a Bill on the subject was published in 1947, which with slight amendment in the Legislature, became

law on 23rd Sept. 1948, and came into effect from 1st April 1949, known as the Indian Factories Act 1948. As a result of ratification of the revised I L. O. conventions relating to night work of women and young persons, it became necessary to make suitable change in the Act and consequently an amending bill was introduced in the Rajya Sabha on 3rd September, 1953. The Bill, besides making changes in the provisions relating to employment of women and children during night, also revised sections relating to holidays with pay in order to simplify the calculation of the qualifying period of service and introduced certain other amendments with a view to removing some of the practical difficulties experienced in the administration of the Act. It was passed into an Act on 7. May, 1957.

(a) Scope of the Act of 1948 and 1954

The act extends to the whole of India except the state of Jammu and Kashmir and applies to all establishments employing 10 or more workers where power is used and to establishments employing 20 or more persons where power is not used. The State Governments are empowered to apply the provisions of the Act to any premises irrespective of the number of persons employed where a manufacturing process is carried on with or without the aid of power except where the work is done by the worker solely with the aid of his family.

(b) Health Safety and Welfare

It specifies in clear terms requirements regarding cleanliness, lighting, ventilation, etc, and provides for the disposal of wastes and effluents, the elimination of dust and fumes, the provision of spittoons and control of temperature. Factories employing over two hundred and fifty persons are required to supply cool drinking water during summer. To eliminate overcrowding the act prescribes a minimum space of 500 cft for each worker in factories built after the commencement of the Act.

The Act contains a separate chapter laying down specific welfare measures such as washing facilities, first aid appliances, canteens, rest shelters, creches and sitting arrangement for workers. Factories employing 500 or more workers are required to appoint welfare officers.

(c) Employment of Young Persons

The minimum age of employment of children has been fixed at 14 persons between 15 and 18 years of age are classed as adolescents. No child or adolescent can be employed in any factory unless he is certified to be fit for work by a certifying surgeon.

(d) Hours of Work

The hours of work of adult workers have been fixed at 48 per week and nine per day with a spreadover of $10\frac{1}{2}$ hours in a day. No adult worker is allowed to work for more than 5 hours unless he had an interval for rest of at least half an hour. The amending Act of 1954, however, permits Chief Inspectors of Factories to grant exemption to factories from the limit relating to daily hours of work to facilitate the change of shifts. It also authorises State Governments or Chief Inspectors to allow any factory for any specified reasons to grant rest interval to its employees after they had worked continuously for six hours. For children and adolescents a $4\frac{1}{2}$ hours a day with a spreadover of 5 hours has been prescribed.

The State Governments are authorised to make rules providing for exemption of certain categories of workers from the provisions of the Act relating to hours of work, weekly holidays, etc., but where such exemptions are made, the Act provides that : (1) the total number of hours of work should not exceed 10 in a day, (2) the total number of hours of overtime work should not exceed 50 in any one quarter, and (3) the spreadover should not exceed 12 hours in a day. Employment of women between 7 P.M. and 6 A.M. is prohibited. By virtue of the amending Act of 1954 further restrictions have been placed on the employment of children and adolescents. The original Act prohibited employment of children between 7 P.M. and 6 A.M. The amending Act prohibits the employment of children as well as adolescents below the age of 17 during night. Night has been defined as a period of at least 12 consecutive hours which must include an interval of at least seven consecutive hours falling between 10 P.M. and 6 A.M. in the case of children and 10 P.M. and 7 A.M. in the case of adolescents. For overtime work the Act provides that the employees shall be paid twice their nominal rates of wages.

(e) Leave with Wages

In addition to weekly holidays the Act provides for the grant of privilege leave with pay. The Act originally passed provided that every worker will be entitled to leave with wages after 12 months, continuous service at the following rate : adult one day for every 20 days of work, subject to a minimum of 10 days ; children one day for every 15 days of work, subject to a minimum of 14 days. However, as the determination of 12 months continuous service led to various difficulties the Act was amended in 1954. Under the amended Act the qualifying period of service is 240 days in a calendar year. Any days of lay-off by agreement or contract or permissible under the standing orders, maternity leave up to a maximum of 12 weeks and leave earned in the year prior to that in which the leave is enjoyed are

to be deemed to be days on which the worker has worked in a factory for the purpose of computation of the period of 240 days, or more. However, workers are not entitled to earn leave for such days. If a worker is discharged or quits service before he has taken the leave earned by him, the employer is required to pay wages to him in respect of leave not enjoyed by him.

(f) Occupation Diseases

It is obligatory on the part of the factory managers to give information regarding specified accidents which cause death or serious bodily injury or regarding occupational diseases contracted by employees. Medical practitioners attending the persons suffering occupational diseases are also required to report the cases to the Chief Inspector of Factories. The Act authorises Factory-Inspectors to take samples of substances used in manufacturing process, if their use is either contrary to the provisions of the Act or likely to cause bodily injury or injury to the health of the workers. The State Governments are authorised to appoint competent persons to enquire into the causes of any accident or into any cause of occupational disease.

(g) Administration

On account of the under scope of the definition of 'factories' under the New Act a large number of smaller factories which were so far unregulated also came within the purview of the Act. The number of registered factories in all part A States and 3 Part C States (*viz.*, Delhi, Ajmer and Coorg) in respect of which information is available increased from nearly 16,000 in 1948 to 32,300 in 1953. In view of the wider coverage and extended scope of the Act, it has become necessary for the State Governments to strengthen their Factory Inspectorates. Though there was an increase in the number of Factory Inspectors during in recent years, yet the increased staff was not able to cope with the increasing demand of factories with the result that a large number of factories remained uninspected. The percentage of uninspected factories during 1945, 1948 and subsequent years was as follows :—

Year	Percentage of uninspected factories
1945	20.0
1948	17.4
1949	20.1
1950	10.5
1951	14.0
1952	16.8
1953	4

As usual the inspecting staff continued to pay special attention to the provisions of the Act relating to health and safety, leave with pay and welfare. From the annual reports received from the states it would appear that though there was considerable improvement during 1953 in sanitary arrangements in factories in some of the States, on the whole there was still much more to be done in this direction specially in the smaller establishments.

The Chief Inspector of the Factories Uttar Pradesh drew attention to the tendency among most of the employers to evade the provisions of the Act relating to Lunch Rooms, and Rest Shelters and to the fact that even those employers who had provided these facilities had not equipped them properly. Generally persuasive methods are adopted by the Factory Inspectors to secure compliance with the provisions of the Act. However, when such measures fail, recourse is also taken to legal action. The following table shows the number of convictions obtained in various States during the year 1953-54. Out of total 4253 convictions, 1657 relate to violation of provisions relating to employment and hours of work, 1244 to notices, registers and returns, 555 to safety, 334 to health and sanitation including welfare and the rest to miscellaneous provisions.

Conviction for Offences under the Factories Act

Number of convictions obtained during the
year 1953 for offences relating to

State	Employment and hours of work	Notices registered and returns	Safety	Health and sani- tation	Others	Total
Andhra	95	11	68	26	51	351
Assam	10	18	10	5	3	46
Bihar	8	26	7	8	...	49
Bombay	1,094	264	320	176	57	1,911
Madhya Pradesh	8	49	25	15	39	136
Madras	63	138	9	20	41	271
Orissa	...	2	...	...	.	2
Punjab	173	472	21	15	34	715
Uttar Pradesh	119	38	25	51	182	415
West Bengal	15	37	9	15	5	81
Delhi	172	89	61	3	51	276
Total	1,657	1,244	555	334	463	4,253

2. Plantation Legislation

The problem of adequate Labour Supply presented serious difficulties to the tea planters in Assam ever since the early stages of the industry. The scarcity of labour in the province led to hectic efforts on the part of the employers to secure labour from distant provinces. The bulk transfer of labour and methods of recruitment adopted by the employers presented various administrative as well as other problems. Efforts to meet these difficulties were made in a series of legislative measures between 1863 and 1901. These early measures—earliest in the history of Labour Legislation in India—were directed towards regulating contractual relations between planters and labourers. While on the one hand the law guaranteed to workers steady work and proper health conditions, on the other hand it restricted their freedom to change employers and thus ensured for the employers a State Labour force. The law thus gave a rise to a system of indentured labour according to which the workers were punishable for breach of contract and liable to be arrested by the employers. The system far from solving the problem of ensuring labour supply led to increasing difficulties and in 1901 the Assam Labour and Emigration Act was passed to regulate and control the recruitment of indentured labour for Assam plantations. In 1908 and 1915 two amending Acts were passed, which abolished the system of indentured labour and withdrew the right of private arrest by the employers. The Act, however, failed to solve the problem of the Industry. The Royal Commission on Labour in India examined the question in considerable detail and made a number of recommendations. These recommendations formed the basis of the Tea Districts Emigrant Labour Act, which was passed in 1932 and came into force from October, 1933.

The Tea Districts Emigrant Labour Act 1932

The Act applies to the whole of India except the State of Jammu and Kashmir. It deals mainly with the regulation of recruitment of workers for tea gardens in Assam. It authorises the State Governments subject to the control of the Central Government to declare any area within a State to be controlled emigration Area and to grant licence to any person to act as a local forwarding agent on behalf of an employer or employers. Recruits from controlled emigration areas can be forwarded to Assam only through licensed local forwarding agents and through the prescribed routes, where arrangements for feeding and accommodation were made by the agent. The State Governments with the concurrence of the Central Government can also declare any controlled emigration area or any part thereof to be restricted recruiting area. In that case no person, except a licensed

forwarding agent, a licensed recruiter or a garden *sirdar*, holding a certificate from the owner or manager of a tea estate can assist any person to proceed to Assam as an assistant emigrant.

The Act prohibits the giving of any assistance to children, below 16 years, to proceed to Assam, unless they are accompanied by their parents or other relatives on whom the child is dependent. Similarly no married woman, who is living with her husband, can be assisted to proceed to Assam without the consent of her husband. Besides every emigrant labour family has a right of repatriation at the cost of the employer after the expiry of three years from the date of his entry into Assam or at an earlier date in certain special circumstances. The Act requires the employer to pay not only the fare for the journey but also to give a subsistence allowance for the period of journey.

The Act provides for the appointment of a controller of emigrant labour with one or more deputies—to discharge such duties and functions as are laid down in the Act. To meet the expenses of the controller and his establishment, the Act provides for the levy of cess on the employers at a rate not more than 9 rupees for each assisted emigrant entering Assam which rate may be determined from year to year.

The Plantation Labour Act of 1951

The Act was passed on 15th October, 1951. It extends to the whole of India except the State of Jammu and Kashmir and applies, in the first instance, to all tea, coffee, rubber and cinchona plantations which admeasure twenty-five acres or more and whereon thirty or more persons are employed or were employed on any day of the preceding twelve months.

Wealth and Welfare. Under the Act employers are required to make effective arrangements for the supply of wholesome drinking water to workers and to provide sufficient number of latrines and urinals, of the prescribed standards separately for men and women; they are also required to provide and maintain such medical facilities for the workers as the State Governments may prescribe. If any employer fails to provide and maintain such facilities, the Chief Inspector of Plantation is authorised to provide and maintain such facilities and to recover the cost from the defaulting employer.

It is the duty of every employer to provide and maintain for every worker and his family, residing in the plantation, the necessary housing accommodation. The Act also empowers State Governments to make rules requiring a planter to provide workers with such number and type of umbrellas, blankets, rain-

coats or other amenities for protection against rain and cold as they may consider proper. Planters employing 300 or more workers are also required to employ welfare officers.

Employment of Children and Young Persons

Employment of children below the age of 12 is prohibited by the Act, persons between the ages of 15 and 18 are declared to be adolescents. No child or adolescent can be employed for work unless he is certified fit to work by a duly appointed certifying surgeon and unless he carries a token to this effect.

Hours of Work

The Act fixes the weekly hours of work for adults at 54. For children and adolescents a 40-hour week has been prescribed. The Act does not fix daily hours of work but lays down that the period of work of an adult worker shall be so arranged that it does not spread over more than 12 hours including his rest interval and the time spent in waiting for work on any day. An employer can refuse to employ a worker if he does not turn up within half an hour of the time fixed for day's work. Children below 12 years are not to work in plantations and night work between 7 P.M. and 6 A.M. is prohibited for women and children.

Every worker shall be allowed leave with wages at the rate of—(a) if an adult, one day for every 20 days of work and (b) if a young person, one day for every 15 days of work. Sickness and maternity benefits are also to be provided for the workers, and the State Government is to make rules for that.

3. Mining Legislation

The first Indian Mines Act was passed in 1901. It provided that any excavation twenty feet below the surface where minerals were searched for or obtained was to be regarded as mines. It provided for the appointment of a Chief Inspector of Mines by the Government of India and Inspectors by Local Self-Governments. The Chief Inspector had the power to prohibit the employment of children and women in mines where the conditions were deemed to be dangerous to health and safety.

The Mines Act of 1923 extended the definition of a mine to include any excavation irrespective of depth for searching for obtaining minerals and limited the hours of work to 54 underground, 60 over-ground. The definition of child was amended to mean any person under the age of 13. Finally the Indian Mines Act, 1935, based partly upon the recommendations of the Royal Commission on Labour and those of Draft Conventions of the Inter-

national Labour Conference of 1931, limited the hours of work above the ground to 54 in the week and 10 in the day. The weekly hours of work under-ground remain the same, but daily hours were reduced from 12 to 9. The minimum age for the admission of children was raised from 13 to 15.

As a result of radical overhaul of the Factories Act in 1948 it became necessary to introduce corresponding changes in the legislation relating to workers in mines and consequently, the Central Government introduced a Bill in Parliament on 8th December, 1949, to revise the law relating to mine workers. The Bill was passed as the Mines Act on 15th March, 1952.

The New Act which came into force on 1st July, 1952, extends to the whole of India except the State of Jammu and Kashmir.

Health, Safety and Welfare

Elaborate provisions have been made in the Act for safeguarding the health and safety of workers and for promoting their welfare. Every mine is required to make suitable arrangements for supply of drinking water both above and below ground and provide urinal and latrines at convenient places. The Act further provides that every mine employing over 500 workers shall maintain ambulances and stretchers of prescribed standard and also an ambulance room of the prescribed size and equipment.

The Central Government are authorised to make rules requiring mines:—

- (i) wherein any women are employed to maintain creches.
- (ii) to maintain at or near pitheads locker rooms and bathing places equipped with shower baths separately for men and women.
- (iii) wherein more than 150 persons are employed to provide and maintain rest shelters and canteens.

(iv) wherein 500 or more workers are normally employed to employ welfare officer.

(v) the Act provides for the levy of excise duty, not exceeding six pias per ton on coal and coke produced in and despatched from mines for which rescue stations may be set up. The proceeds of the excise duty are to be utilised for the creation of a central rescue station fund.

Employment of Young Persons

The Act fixes the minimum age of employment in mines at 15 and prohibits the presence of children (i.e., persons below the age of 15) in any part of mine which is below ground. The minimum

age of employment below ground has been fixed at 18. It continues the ban imposed on employment of women under-ground and further provides that on surface no women will be allowed to work except between the hours of 6 a. m. and 7 p. m.

Hours of Work

The Act limits the hours of work of adult workers to 9 per day and 48 per week if employed above ground and 8 per day and 48 per week if employed below ground. The maximum spread-over has been fixed at 12 in the case of surface workers and 8 in the case of underground workers. Slightly longer hours of work have, however, been prescribed for certain categories of underground workers, viz., pump minders. In their case a 5½ hours' week has been prescribed and spread-over has been fixed at 9.

Leave with Wages

The Act also provides for the grant of compensatory holidays and holidays with pay to workers besides a weekly day of rest. The workers are entitled to leave at the following rate after completing 12 months' continuous service (i) 14 days for monthly paid employees, (ii) 7 days for weekly paid employees or a loader or those employed on a piece rate basis below ground. In case of monthly paid employees leave can be accumulated up to 28 days. The Act also contains adequate penalty provisions for violating its provisions and provides for punishment with imprisonment or fine or both.

Administration. For purpose of administration the Act provides for the an appointment of Chief Inspector of Mines. He is to be assisted in this work by Inspectors of Mines and by District Magistrate who may also be required to discharge some of the duties of the Inspector of Mines

In 1953, there were 3,130 working mines in India of which 2,369 were inspected. The total number of inspections made during the year was 6,222 as against 5968 in 1952. As a result of irregularities noticed 271 prosecutions were launched during the year. One hundred and thirty-eight cases were instituted against owners, agents, managers and directors for non-appointment of managers, for permitting mines to be managed by persons not possessing the prescribed qualifications, 18 cases were filed against agents, owners and manager of mines for submitting incorrect statistics of stocks in their monthly returns and 4 cases were filed against owners, etc., for failure to maintain joint survey plans of working lying within 100 feet of the common boundaries of adjacent mines. The remaining prosecutions were launched for various violations of the Act and the Regulations, Rules, Byelaws etc., framed thereunder.

4. Transport Legislation

The most important transport legislation in India is that for the railway workers. So far as railway workshops are concerned they come under the Factories Act. Chapter VI (a) of the Indian Railways Act of 1890 which was amended in 1930, however, deals with hours of work and periods of rest of all railway employees, except those covered by the Factories Act and the Mines Act.

The Indian Railways Act of 1890

Workers covered by the Indian Railways Act, are classified into two categories, namely, "continuous workers" and essentially intermittent workers. According to the Act the hours of work of essentially intermittent workers have been fixed at 84 a week and those of continuous workers at 60 a week on an average during a month. All railway workers have to be given a rest of not less than 24 consecutive hours each week commencing on Sunday except in emergency cases of dislocation of railway service or pressure of work. But labour is to be compensated for all leave foregone and overtime is to be paid at the rate of $1\frac{1}{2}$ times of ordinary rate of pay. The Act empowers the Government to make rules regarding certain matters dealt with by the Act. The rules thus framed, are known as including a full night (d) excluded they include certain class IV staff on night duties, *e.g.*, saloon attendants, gate-keepers, etc., and person employed in confidential capacity, supervision staff and members of health and medical staff. They should have at least one period of rest of 48 consecutive hours in a month or one period of 24 consecutive hours in each fortnight. For the running staff, the Adjudicator recommended that their period of duty should not exceed 10 hours at a stretch, and the rest period for them should consist of 4 periods of at least 30 consecutive hours each or 5 periods of not less than 22 consecutive hours each in a month. The recommendations regarding hours of work, period of rest and leave reserve were accepted by the Government of India and were declared binding for a period of three years by an order issued in January 1948. Since the implementation of the recommendations involved reclassification of all railway employees the Government issued instructions to Railway Administration to implement the award in three stages by 31st March, 1951. The award was implemented by due date on all Indian Government Railways consequent on taking over of the ex-Indian State Railways by the Government of India from 1st April, 1950, it was decided to extend the benefit of the award to the staff of those railways as well. According to 1953-54 Report of the Railway Board the recommendation concerning hours of work and periodic rests have been implemented on all the ex-states

Railway sections the Railway Servants Hours of Employment Rules, but both the Act and the rules are generally referred to as Hours of Employment Regulations.

In 1946, the All-India Railwaymen's Federation approached the Government of India to appoint an Adjudicator in respect of certain demands of railway workers and the late Justice Shri G. S. Rajadhyaksha was accordingly appointed as an Adjudicator by Government of India in April of that year. The matters in dispute related to hours of work, periodic rest, leave reserves, and leave rules and holiday concessions for daily-rated and inferior staff. The Adjudicator submitted his award to the Government in May, 1947, and recommended the extension of the scope of the Hours of Employment Regulations so as to cover various other categories of workers, who were then excluded and suggested the following four categories of the workers :

(a) Intensive, *i.e.*, those whose work is of specially strenuous nature involving continuous concentration or hard manual labour. Their hours of work should be 45 in a week on an average in a month and they should have a periodic rest of 30 consecutive hours every week.

(b) Continuous, *i.e.*, their weekly hours of work are to be 54 on an average in a month with a periodic rest of 30 consecutive hours every week and they are the workers who do not come under any other category.

(c) Essentially intermittent, *i.e.*, those whose daily duty hours include some periods of inaction. Their weekly hours are to be 75 with a periodic rest of 24 consecutive hours every week except ex-Bikaner and ex-Jodhpur Railway sections of the Northern Railway where it was in the process of being implemented.

5. The Seamen's Legislation

(a) *The Indian Merchant Shipping Act, 1923.* The conditions of employment of Indian seamen are regulated by the provision of Part II of the Indian Merchant Shipping Acts which was passed in 1923. Since its enactment the Act has been amended on several occasions. Among the important amending acts are the Acts passed in 1949 and in 1957. The amending Act of 1949 was passed to regulate the supply of wartime labour by providing for the setting up of Seamen's Employment Offices while the amending Act of 1957 was passed to provide for the medical examination of seamen and to prescribe their qualification. The main provisions of the Act as they stand now are given below :—

Recruitment

Under the Act a seaman can be engaged on an Indian, British or foreign ship only by the master of the ship in the

presence of a shipping master in the prescribed manner. The master of every Indian and British ship except home trade ships of a burden not exceeding 300 tons, is required to enter into an agreement with every seaman at the time of engagement. In case the services of any Indian seaman are to be terminated at any foreign port there is a stipulation to provide him either suitable employment on board a ship bound for the port when he was recruited or to such other port in India as may be agreed upon or to provide a passage to him to some other port in India free of charge or on such other terms as may be agreed upon.

Under the Act every seaman engaged by an Indian or British foreign going ship must be discharged before the shipping master. The master of every ship, except home-trade ships under three hundred tons, is required to give a certificate of discharge to seamen discharged from his ship. Such certificates are to be in a prescribed form and must specify the periods of services of the seamen and the place of their discharge. A seaman is also entitled to receive from the master of every ship except a home trade ship of less than 300 tons, a certificate regarding the quality of his work and whether he has fulfilled his obligations under the agreement.

Employment of Young Persons

Employment of children below the age of fourteen with certain exceptions is prohibited. Similarly the employment of young persons below the age of 18 as trimmers or stokers except under certain specified conditions, is also prohibited in any ship registered in India.

Payment of Wages

As regards the payment of wages, a seaman's right to wages begin from the time he commences his work or at the time he is required to present himself on board a ship under his agreement which happens first. Wages are to be paid within 3 days after the cargo has been delivered or within 5 days after the seaman's discharge whichever is earlier. If there is delay in payment the seaman is entitled to compensation at the rate of two days' pay for every day of delay, but the total amount is not to exceed 10 days' double pay. The Act also regulates deductions from wages and the system of making advances to seamen. If the agreement is prematurely terminated, provision has been made for the payment of wages in such cases. If a seaman is discharged, otherwise than in accordance with the terms of his agreement, he is entitled to receive not only his wages, but a compensation to the extent of one month's wages. The wages cannot be attached or assigned before their payment.

Health and Welfare

The supply of sufficient water of good quality for the use of the crew on the scale specified in the agreement has been provided by the law. Every foreign going Indian and British ship and every home trade ship of more than 300 tons of burden is required to keep on board a sufficient supply of medicines and appliances for dealing with sickness, accidents, etc., on the voyage masters, seamen or apprentices belonging to any ship registered in India are also entitled for free medicines and every seaman on board a ship must be allotted living accommodation of not less than 12 superficial ft. and 72 ft.

Other Provisions

A seaman who had been lawfully engaged cannot leave the ship unless his agreement terminates. A deserter is liable to forfeit all or any part of his effects which he leaves on board and wages which he may have earned. If the desertion takes place outside India, he is also liable to imprisonment which may extend to 12 weeks. Penalties have been provided for seamen refusing to work or neglecting to join ships or absenting themselves without leave without sufficient reasons.

The Dock Workers (Regulation of Employment) Act 1948

The dock workers (Regulation of Employment) Act was passed in March, 1948, with a view to eliminating the hardship caused to dock workers on account of the casual nature of their employment. The Act empowers the Central Government in the case of major ports and State Governments in the case of other ports to frame a scheme for the registration of dock workers in order to ensure greater regularity of employment and to regulate the employment of dock workers whether registered or not and the terms and conditions of such employment in any port. In particular the scheme may provide *inter alia* for regulating the recruitment and entry into the scheme of dock workers and their registration, for regulating the terms and conditions of employment, *eg.*, rates of remuneration, hours of work, and holidays with pay, for prohibiting restricting or otherwise controlling the employment, of dock workers to whom the scheme does not apply, for training and welfare of dock workers, for health and safety measures in places where dock workers are employed in so far as satisfactory provision therefor does not exist apart from the scheme; for payment to dock workers covered by the scheme of minimum pay for periods during which employment or full employment may not be available for them.

Provision has also been made in this Act for the setting up of an advisory committee to advise the Government on matters

arising out of the administration of the Act or any other scheme. The committee is to consist of not more than 15 members representing government labour and employers in equal numbers, with a nominated chairman by the Government. Provision has also been made for the appointment of Inspectors. In June, 1949, the Central Government framed rules and in February, 1950, set up an advisory committee for the purpose. Besides, on the basis of a settlement reached between the dock workers in Bombay and their employers, a committee was appointed by the Government of India to frame a comprehensive scheme regarding the registration of stevedore labour, their employment in rotation, fixation of wages, etc. The committee consisted of two representatives each of the Bombay Stevedore's Association and the Bombay Dock Workers Union and one representative each of the Central Government and the Bombay Port Trust. The scheme known as the Bombay Dock Workers (Regulation of Employments) Scheme was framed in 1951. It provides for the establishment of the Bombay Dock Labour Board for its administration and for the appointment of the Bombay Stevedore's Association for its day today administration. A special officer to deal with disciplinary matters and an Appeal Tribunal for hearing appeals, are also to be appointed. The scheme provides for the maintenance of a monthly register, a Reserve Pool Register, and a register for employers. No registered worker can work for or employed by any registered employer unless he is allocated to that employer. The Bombay Dock Labour Board was constituted with 12 members in April, 1957. For Madras and Calcutta ports also such schemes have been framed and enforced.

6. Legislation relating to Workers in Shops and Commercial Establishments

Acts for regulating the conditions of employment of persons employed in shops and commercial establishments are at present in force in 22 States. The Government of India first examined the question of granting protection to the workers employed in shops and small commercial establishments in connection with the ratification of the I. L. O. conventions in 1930, but the convention was not ratified. The lead in the matter was given by the Bombay Government which passed an Act on the subject in November, 1940. The Act was revised in 1949. Subsequently, Acts were passed by the Governments of Bengal and Punjab in 1940, Uttar Pradesh, Madras and Madhya Pradesh in 1947, Assam and Mysore in 1948, Travancore and Cochin in 1950, Hyderabad in 1951 and Madhya Bharat in 1952. In 1948 the Government of Saurashtra adopted the Bombay Act of 1939.

There is also a Central Act known as the Weekly Holidays Act, 1942, and an Act known as Holidays with Pay Act, 1946.

The main provisions of some of the principal State Acts, as they are in force now, are given below:—

Scope

Subject to certain specific exceptions, the Acts apply in the first instance to shops, commercial establishments, restaurants and places of amusement in certain selected centres.

Hours of Work. The table shows the main provisions of the Acts relating to hours of work and rest intervals:—

Provisions of the Act regarding hours of work and rest intervals¹

Establishment	Assam	West Bengal	Bombay	Madhya Pradesh	Madras	Punjab	U. P.	Hyderabad	Madhya Bharat	Bihar
1. Shops										
Daily hours	9	10	9	8	8	10	8	8	9	9
Weekly hours	50	56	48	48	48	54	...	48	48	48
Rest intervals	1 hour	half an hour	1 hour	1 hour	1 hour	half an hour	half an hour	1 hour	1 hour	half an hour
	after 4 hours of work	after 5 hours of work	after 5 hours' work	after 4 hours' work	after 4 hours' work	after 6 hours' work	after 5 hours' work	after 5 hours' work	after 5 hours' work	after 5 hours' work
			work	work	work	work	work	work	work	work
2. Commercial Establishments										
Daily hours	...	...	9	8	8	10	8	8	9	9
Weekly hours	...	...	48	48	48	54	...	48	48	48
Rest intervals	...	...	1 hour	1 hour	1 hour	half an hour	half an hour	1 hour	1 hour	half an hour
			after 5 hours' work	after 4 hours' work	after 4 hours' work	after 6 hours' work	after 5 hours' work	after 5 hours' work	after 5 hours' work	after 5 hours' work
			work	work	work	work	work	work	work	work
3. Restaurants and Places of Amusements										
Daily hours	10	10	9	8	8	10	8	8	9	9
Weekly hours	...	...	...	48	48	54	...	48	...	48
Rest intervals	half an hour	half an hour	1 hour	half an hour	half an hour	1 hour	half an hour	1 hour	1 hour	half an hour
	after 6 hours' work	after 6 hours' work	after 5 hours' work	after 4 hours' work	after 4 hours' work	after 6 hours' work	after 5 hours' work	after 5 hours' work	after 5 hours' work	after 5 hours' work
	hours' work	hours' work	hours' work	hours' work	hours' work	hours' work	hours' work	hours' work	hours' work	hours' work

¹ *Labour Year Book, 1953-54 (1953), pp. 66-67.*

Besides all the Acts contain provisions for regulating the payment of wages of employees. In U. P., Hyderabad and Madras, the wage period should not be more than a month and in Punjab more than a fortnight. In Assam it is one month. The wages must be paid within 10 days in Bengal and Assam, 7 days in U. P. and 5 days in Madras and Hyderabad and immediately on demand in the Punjab, after the expiry of each wage period. Provisions have also been made for overtime work and for deductions and fines. Most of the Acts provide that a notice of one month should be given in case of termination of service or a month's wages should be paid. Chief Inspectors of Shops and Commercial Establishments have been appointed in West Bengal, U. P., Hyderabad and Punjab for the administration of the Acts and in some States, Inspectors of Factories have been appointed for the purpose.

The working of these Acts in various States shows that they have not been enforced properly due to inadequacy of inspecting staff and there is generally non-compliance with the provisions of the Acts about holidays, etc., and in certain States where the Acts have been enforced only recently, the employers and the employees do not even know all the provisions. Cases are common when the workers are called on weekly holidays, overtime is not paid, no record is kept and wages are not paid regularly. Hence such enforcement of these Acts is required.

IMPORTANT LABOUR LAWS AT A GLANCE

Name of Act and its scope	Minimum age of employment	Maximum hours of work			Rest interval	Rate of overtime payment	Weekly holidays	Annual leave with pay
		Daily	Weekly	Daily Spread-over				
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1. Factories Act, 1948 <i>Scope</i> : Non-power factories employing 20 or more workers and power-using factories employing 10 or more ; others if specially notified.	14	9 for adults and 4½ for persons below 18 years not certified fit to work as adults.	48 for adults	10½ for adults and 5 for persons below 18 years not certified fit to work as adults.	At least ½ an hour after 5 hours' work.	Twice the ordinary rate.	One day without pay.	For working 240 days in a calendar year—1 day for every 20 days worked for adult and 1 day for every 15 days worked for persons below 18 years not certified fit to work as adults.
2. Mines Act, 1952. <i>Scope</i> : All Mines.	15 above ground and 18 below ground. Persons between 15 and 18 employable underground if medically certified fit or work as adults.	9 above ground, 8 below ground 4½ for persons below 18 years employed above ground.	48 (54 permissible for certain categories of underground workers).	12 above ground, 8 below ground, 5 for persons below 18 years not certified fit to work as adults. 9 hours permissible for certain categories of workers underground.	For surface workers as in Factories Act ½ an hour after 4½ hours' work for persons below 18 years.	<i>Underground</i> —Twice the ordinary rate. <i>Above ground</i> —1½ times the ordinary rate.	One day without pay.	Monthly paid—14 days after 12 months, continuous service. Weekly paid workers or loaders or other piece rated persons below ground 7 days after 12 months' continuous service.

3. Plantations Labour Act, 1951. <i>Scope</i> : Tea, coffee, rubber and cinchona plantations administering 25 acres or more and employing at least 30 workers.	12	—	54 for adults and 40 for persons below 18 years.	12	As in Factories Act.	—	One day without pay.	<i>For adults</i> —1 day for every 20 days worked. <i>For persons below 18 years</i> —1 day for every 15 days worked.
4. Indian Railways Act, 1899. <i>Scope</i> : All Railways.	15 (under the Employment of Children Act, 1938).	..	75 for essentially intermittent workers, 54 for intensive and 54 for continuous workers on an average in any month.	..	..	1½ times the ordinary pay	Intensive and continuous workers 30 consecutive hours in a week Essentially intermittent workers 24 consecutive hours including a full night in a work Others 48 consecutive hours a month or 24 consecutive hours in each fortnight.	..
5. Indian Merchant Shipping Act, 1923. <i>Scope</i> : All ships registered in India.	14 Employment of young persons below the age of 18 as trimmers or stokers except under certain specified conditions prohibited.	..	..	..	..	..	..	..

Name of Act and its scope	Minimum age of employment	Maximum hours of work			Rest interval	Rate of over-time payment	Weekly holidays	Annual leave with pay
		Daily	Weekly	Daily Spread-over				
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
6. Shops and Commercial Establishments Acts of State Governments.	Ranges from 12 to 14.	Ranges from 8 to 10 for adults and from 5 to 7 for children and adolescents.	Ranges from 48 to 56 for adults and from 30 to 42 for children and adolescents.	Ranges from 11 to 14. In Bihar 8 for children between 12 and 14 years. 10 for young persons between 14 and 18 years.	Ranges from $\frac{1}{2}$ an hour to 1 hour after 4 to 6 hours' work for adults and from $\frac{1}{2}$ an hour to 1 hour after 3 to 4 hours' continuous work for children and adolescents.	Varies from $1\frac{1}{2}$ times to twice the ordinary rate of wages.	Ranges from 1 to $1\frac{1}{2}$ days	10 16 days after 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ months' continuous service (one month in Madhya Bharat) For Children : Bihar 1 day for every 15 days work. Mysore : 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ days Annual Sick Leave (Madras, Mysore, U. P., Hyderabad), 10 15 days with wages, Assam ; One month on half pay. ; Annual Casual Leave Madras Assam, We Bengal, U. P., Hyderabad, Tripura, Madhya Bharat, Travancore-Cochin 10 to 14 days on full pay.
								Annual Holidays all Hyderabad 3 Gazetted holidays, 3 religious holidays in Assam and 3 Gazetted holidays in U. P.

Scope - All shops and commercial establishments in areas notified by State Governments.

7. Minimum Wages Act, 1948. Scope : Scheduled manufacturing industries and agriculture, mica mines, plantations, road construction, building operations and local authorities.	..	9 for adults and 4½ for children.	48	12	...	1½ times the ordinary rate in agriculture and double the ordinary rate in other employments.	One day with or without pay.
8. Employment of Children Act, 1938. Scope : Railways ; ports ; bidi making ; carpet-weaving ; cement manufacture cloth printing , dyeing and weaving , matches , fireworks ; mica ; shellac , soaps ; tanning and wool cleaning. Scope may be extended by State Governments.	15 in Ports and Railways, 14 in others.		...	...	...	...	...

SOME OTHER IMPORTANT LABOUR LAWS

1. Industrial Disputes Act, 1947.
Provides for machinery for conciliation, arbitration and adjudication of disputes, payment of compensation during lay-off and gratuity on retrenchment.
2. Payment of Wages Act, 1936.
Provides for fixation of wage periods, regular payment of wages and authorised deduction.
3. Workmen's Compensation Act, 1923.
Provides for payment of compensation for incapacity due to employment injury and occupational diseases.
4. Employees' State Insurance Act, 1948.
Applies to non-essential power using factories employing 20 or more workers and provides for sickness, maternity, disablement and medical benefits as also benefits for dependents in case of death due to employment injury.

IMPORTANT LABOUR LAWS AT A GLANCE—(Continued)

Name of Act and its scope	Welfare	Health	Safety	Prohibition of night work of women and children	Other restrictions on employment of women and children
	10	11	12	13	14
<p>1. Factories Act, 1948.</p> <p><i>Scope</i> : Non-power factories employing 20 or more workers and power using factories employing 10 or more ; others if specially notified.</p>	<p>Suitable and adequate <i>washing facilities, Canteens</i> in units employing 250 workers. <i>Creches</i> in units employing 50 women. Factories employing over 150 workers to provide <i>shelters or rest rooms and lunch rooms</i></p> <p>Units employing 500 or more workers to employ prescribed number of <i>Welfare Officers</i>.</p>	<p>Provisions regarding cleanliness, disposal of wastes and effluents, ventilation, temperature, exhaust for dust and fumes, overcrowding, lighting, drinking, water, latrines and urinals and spittoons. First aid boxes and ambulances (for factories employing more than 500 workers).</p>	<p>Provisions regarding fencing of machinery, examination or operation of machinery in motion, striking gear and devices for cutting off power in emergency limit of carrying excessive weights, protection of eyes, precautions against dangerous fumes, etc.</p>	<p><i>Women</i> not to be employed from 7 P.M. to 6 A. M. Relaxation outside 10 P.M. and 5 A M by State Governments permissible. <i>Children</i> cannot be employed during night which means a period of 12 consecutive hours which includes interval between 10 P.M. and 6 A.M.</p>	<p><i>Women</i> not to work for more than 9 hours in a day</p> <p><i>Women and children</i> not to clean, lubricate or adjust any part of (a) a prime mover or any transmission machinery while they are in motion, or (ii) any machine if such work would expose them to risk of injury from any moving part either of that machine or any adjacent machine. They cannot be employed for pressing cotton when cotton opener is at work. <i>Non-adult workers</i> cannot be employed unless certified fit to work.</p>
<p>2. Mines Act, 1952.</p> <p><i>Scope</i> : All Mines</p>	<p>Provisions for <i>pillhead baths and locker rooms</i>.</p> <p><i>Canteens</i> in units employing 250 workers. <i>Creches</i> also to be provided according to Rules.</p> <p><i>Rest shelters</i> in units employing over 150 workers according to Rules.</p>	<p>Provisions regarding drinking water, latrines and urinals, and boxes, ventilation and shower baths. Ambulances stretchers and medicines to be provided in mines with over 500 workers.</p>	<p>Provisions regarding rescue station, safe working of mines, reporting of accidents, etc.</p>	<p><i>Women</i> not to be employed between 7 P. M. to 6 A. M. Relaxation permissible except during 10 P. M. and 5 A. M.</p> <p><i>Persons below 18 years</i> not certified fit to work as adults not to work from 6 P. M. to 6 A. M.</p>	<p>Employment of women underground and of children anywhere is prohibited. Adolescents cannot be employed below ground unless certified fit to work as adults.</p>

<p>3. Plantations Labour Act, 1951. <i>Scope</i> : Tea, Coffee, rubber and cinchona plantations admeasuring 25 acres or more and employing at least 30 workers.</p>	<p><i>Welfare Officers in Units</i> employing 500 or more workers. <i>Medical facilities</i> as prescribed by the State Governments. <i>Canteens</i> in units employing over 150 workers according to Rules. <i>Creeches</i> in units employing 50 women. <i>Recreational facilities</i> as prescribed by State Governments. <i>Welfare Officers</i> in units employing 300 or more workers. Provision of <i>educational facilities</i> for workers' children, <i>housing facilities</i>, <i>supply of umbrellas, raincoats, etc.</i>, to workers and payment of <i>sickness and maternity allowances</i> according to Rules.</p>	<p>Provisions regarding drinking water, latrines and urinals. Medical facilities as prescribed by State Governments.</p>	<p>—</p>	<p>Relaxation outside 10 P. M. and 5 A. M. permissible by Central Government. <i>Women and children</i> not be employed during 7 P.M. to 6 A.M. Relaxation by State Governments permissible.</p>	<p><i>Non-ndull workers</i> cannot be employed unless certified fit to work and carry a token to this effect while at work.</p>
<p>4. Indian Railways Act, 1890. <i>Scope</i> : All Railways.</p>		<p>Provisions regarding drinking water and keeping of adequate supply of medicines. Seamen on board a ship to be allotted living accommodation of not less than 12 superficial ft., and 72 cft.</p>	<p>Provisions regarding life saving appliances.</p>	<p>None-below 18 to be employed unless certified fit to work and prior medical examination is essential.</p>	
<p>5. Indian Merchant Shipping Act, 1923. <i>Scope</i> : All ships registered in India.</p>					

Name of Act and its scope	Welfare	Health	Safety	Prohibition of night work of women and children	13
<p>6. Shops and Commercial Establishments Acts of state Governments. <i>Scope</i>—All shops and commercial establishments in areas notified by State Governments.</p>	10	11	<p>Madras, Mysore, Bombay, Madhya Bharat, Travancore-Cochin and Saurashtra—Provisions for precautions against fire.</p>	<p>Women not to be employed during 7 P.M. to 7 A.M. in Bihar, and 7 P.M. to 6 A.M. in Bombay and Saurashtra. Children not to be employed between 7 P.M. and 6 A.M. in Bombay, Madras, Travancore-Cochin, Saurashtra and Hyderabad, 9 P.M. and 7 A.M. in Madhya Pradesh, 7 P.M. and 8 A.M. in Punjab and 7 P.M. and 7 A.M. in Bihar.</p>	
<p>7. Minimum Wages Act, 1948. <i>Scope</i> : Scheduled manufacturing industries and agriculture, mica mines, plantations, road construction, building operations and local authorities.</p>					

Employment below 14 prohibited in the occupations covered except in Railways and Ports where this age is 15. Those aged 15—17 employed in Railways and Ports to be allowed rest interval of at least 12 consecutive hours in a day; of this period at least 7 consecutive hours must be between 10 P.M. and 7 A.M.

8. Employment of Children Act, 1938.

Scope : Railways ; sports; bidi making; carpet-weaving; cement manufacture ; cloth printing ; dyeing and weaving; matches ; fireworks; mica; shellac, soap; tanning and wool cleaning. Scope may be extended by State Government.

SOME OTHER IMPORTANT LABOUR LAWS (Continued)

5. Coal Mines Provident Fund and Bonus Schemes Act, 1948.
6. Employees' Provident Funds Act, 1952.
7. Mines Maternity Benefit Act, 1941 and State Acts on Maternity Benefit.
8. Coal Mines Labour Welfare Fund Act, 1947.
9. Mica Mines Labour Welfare Fund' Act, 1946.
10. U. P. Sugar and Power Alcohol Industries Labour Welfare and Development Fund Act, 1950.
11. Bombay Labour Welfare Fund Act 1953.

Provides for payment of bonus to, and constitution of, Contributory Provident Funds for workers in coal mines.

Provides for constitution of Contributory Provident Funds for workers employed in selected industries, e.g., Textiles, Engineering, Cement, Paper, Cigarettes and Iron and Steel.

Provides for payment of benefit at rates varying from -18/- per day to average daily wages for periods ranging from 7 to 12 weeks to women employed in factories, mines and plantations.

Provides for constitution of a Fund out of a levy on coal despatched for provision of welfare and housing facilities for coal mine workers.

Provides for constitution of a similar fund for workers in mica mines

Provides for a similar fund for workers in sugar factories.

Provides for the constitution of a similar welfare fund out of fines and unpaid accumulation for the benefit of factory and transport workers.

CHAPTER XVIII

INDIA AND THE I. L. O.

On the national plane, the efforts of the working men to lay the foundations of a system of industrial democracy were slowly but surely making themselves felt everywhere before the outbreak of the war of 1914. The American Federation of Labour, at its annual meeting of 1914, adopted a resolution proposing the holding of an International Labour Conference at the same time and place as the Peace Congress. Copies of this resolution were sent to the International Federation of Trade Unions and to the national trade union organisations of all countries. On the 1st May 1916, this proposal resulted in a request to the Allied Supreme Council to consider the holding of an International Labour Conference, on the ground that protection of labour became an international problem. On the 31st January, 1919 the Peace Conference appointed a commission on International Labour Legislation to enquire into the conditions of employment, and to recommend the form of a permanent agency to continue such inquiry and consider in co-operation with and under the direction of the League of Nations. While this commission was in session, an International Socialist Conference was held at Berne (2nd to 7th February, 1919) which was attended by 90 delegates representing 25 countries. The Peace Conference took up these ideas and presented them in a form acceptable to the Powers participating in the Peace Conference. The Labour Commission appointed by the conference held 35 meetings and drew up its report in two parts. It emphasised the principles that universal peace could be maintained only on the basis of social justice, and that the failure of any country to make the conditions of its workers equitable, made it very difficult for other countries to humanise the conditions of their own workers. The Commission also suggested certain general principles and methods for protecting labour, which all industrial countries could adopt with modification suited to their special circumstances. Lastly it suggested the holding of an International Labour Conference every year to devise means for progressive improvements in the conditions of the workers of all the participating countries and the establishment of a permanent International office at Geneva to give effect to the suggestions of the annual conferences. It is in response to this desire to provide machinery for the final solution of all social discord that I. L. O. has been created to secure peace between the different layers of human society and entrusted with the task of securing the observance of these principles.

Objects of the I L. O.

The I. L. O. like the League, was set up under the treaty of Versailles. The aim of its founders was the establishment of universal peace based upon social justice. What they had in mind was not the creation of a super-state but rather of an Association of states, which through systematic procedure could enable its members to better labour conditions by international agreement. Consequently, they specified in the Charter examples of improvements they deemed to be urgently required. These were:

"The regulation of the hours of work, including the establishment of a maximum working day and week, the regulation of labour supply, the prevention of unemployment, the provision of an adequate living wage, the protection of the workers against sickness, disease and injury arising out of his employment, the protection of children, young persons and women, provision for old age and injury, protection of the interest of workers when employed in countries other than their own, recognition of the principle of freedom of association, the organisation of vocational and technical education and other measures"

Guiding Principles

They also stipulated nine methods and principles for regulating labour conditions. Though some of these, as for instance 48-hour week, have since been attained and even surpassed at that time (1919) all were regarded as of "special and urgent importance"

The nine methods and principles were :

(1) The guiding principle that labour should not be regarded merely as a commodity or article of commerce.

(2) The right of association for all lawful purposes by the employed as well as by the employers.

(3) The payment to the employed of a wage adequate to maintain a reasonable standard of life as this is understood in their time and country.

(4) The adoption of an 8-hour day or a 48-hour week as the standard to be aimed at where it has not already been attained.

(5) The adoption of a weekly rest of at least 24 hours which should include Sunday wherever practicable.

(6) The abolition of child labour and the imposition of such limitations on the labour of young persons as shall permit the continuation of their education and assure their proper physical development.

(7) The principle that men and women should receive equal remuneration for work of equal value.

(8) The standard set by law in each country with respect to the conditions of labour should have due regard to the equitable economic treatment of all workers lawfully resident therein.

(9) Each State should make provision for a system of inspection in which women should take part, in order to ensure the enforcement of the laws and regulations for the protection of the employed.

A Non-political Organisation

The policy of the I. L. O. is strictly non-political and economically non-partisan, as is ensured by its form of organisation only a State can be a member but under its constitution, the representatives of a State include employers' and workers' delegates.

The Machinery of the I. L. O.

The machinery of the I. L. O. comprises three parts :

- (1) The International Labour Conference,
- (2) The International Labour Office, and
- (3) The Governing Body.

1. *The International Labour Conference.* The Conference which may best be described as a "World Labour Parliament" meets at least once a year. But special conferences, as for instance, the maritime sessions to discuss matters pertaining only to seamen, are sometimes held in interim. Each member state is required to send four delegates to the Conference two representing the Government and one each the employers and workers. The chief functions of the conference are :

(1) To consider and discuss the annual report of the Director of the International Labour Office. This report is a survey from the international standpoint of the social tendencies of the world and its component parts.

(2) To consider specific questions relating to labour conditions, with a view to drawing up international agreement.

(3) To receive the reports made annually by member states on the way they are applying agreement made at previous sessions to which they are parties.

The conference in the course of its the 37 sessions held so far has adopted 103 conventions and 98 recommendations.

2. *The International Labour Office.* Acts as a secretariat, a world informative centre, and a publishing house. It is staffed by experts drawn from many different countries whose knowledge, experience and advice are available to all member nations. The number of established posts provided for in the budget of the I. L. O. for 1954 including Branch Offices was 671 of which 264 posts were of the rank of Member of Division or above. The number of Indian nationals on the staff of the I. L. O. excluding Branch Offices was 13 on the 1st September, 1954, of which 10 were of the Rank of Member of Division and above

The Indian Branch of the I. L. O. has on its staff a Director and five officers with other necessary staff. Shree V. K. R. Menon continues as the Director of Indian Branch. During 1953-54 the Director participates in important conferences, such the Indian Labour Conference, the Standing Labour Committee, the conventions committee, the annual conventions of employers' workers' organisations, and also in the Regional seminar on housing and Community Improvement held at New Delhi under the auspices of the Government of India and the United Nations.

3. *Governing Body* The Governing Body of the I. L. O. is the Executive Council of the organisation and exercise general supervision over the work of the office and frames its budget originally it consisted of 32 members 16 representing governments, 8 employers and 8 workers. Now it has increased from 32 to 40 members, 20 representing governments, 10 representing employers and 10 representing workers. The ten permanent members are : Canada, China, France, India, Italy, Japan, Soviet Union, U. K. U. S. A. and West Germany. India has occupied one of the permanent seats on the governing body from the very beginning.

Nature of Labour Conventions

The machinery of the I. L. O. was designed for two purposes, (i) the 'Legislative business' of drawing up International labour arrangements, and (ii) collection and distribution of information about Labour conditions. The two purposes are closely linked to a large extent. The drawing up of agreement is impossible unless the information has already been collected. The agreements, however, are not 'Legislative' in the usual sense of the word. The delegates at the conference reach certain conclusions, but those findings do not automatically bind the states which send the delegates. The national authorities are obliged, by treaty, to consider the findings, but they are free to reject or to adopt them. They have to take their own decisions, if they decide to accept them and to bind themselves to observe the findings of the conference, then they make themselves responsible to the world for

seeing that within their territories the findings are carried out. In some cases, this result is reached without a convention being ratified by a state. In a sense then, the object of the International Labour organisation is to promote national legislation.

Conventions and Recommendations of the Conference

The conference decides by a majority of two-thirds of the delegate's votes whether the proposal should take the form of (a) of Recommendation to be submitted to the Members for consideration with a view to effect being given to it by national legislation or otherwise, or (b) of a Draft International Convention for ratification by the Members. In either case, the Member States must within period of 18 months from the closing of the session of the conference, bring the matter before their respective legislatures, or other competent authorities in the country for legislation or other action, and if accepted then it is said to have been ratified and then has to be enforced.

These Conventions and Recommendations lay down minimum international standards for labour legislation and other measures and are based on careful fact finding and discussion. As a two-third majority of the conference is required for their adoption, they represent the general agreement of informed world opinion. Since the first conference in 1919 till 1955 the conference in its 36 sessions adopted 103 conventions and 98 recommendations. These deal with questions like hours of work, paid vacations, women's work, the protection of children, prevention and compensation of industrial accidents, insurance against unemployment, sickness, old age and death, minimum wages, etc., etc. As pointed out above, the decisions of the conference are not automatically binding, but the Governments must submit these conventions to their national legislatures and if a legislature accepts the conventions, then the Government is bound to apply it. India so far has ratified 22 conventions but she has incorporated into her national legislation the essential features of some of the other conventions also.

I. L. O. Conventions ratified by India

The International Labour Conference has adopted 103 covenants and 98 recommendations so far out of which India has ratified 22 conventions which are mentioned below.

Conventions	Date of Registration of Ratification
No. 1—Hours of work (Industry) convention 1919 limiting the hours of work in industrial undertakings to eight in the day and forty-eight in the week.	14-7-1921

No. 4—Night work (Women) convention 1919 concerning employment of women during the night.	14-7-1921
No. 5—Minimum age (Industry) convention 1919	1955
No. 6—Night work of young persons (Industry) convention 1919 concerning the night work of young person employed in industry.	14-7-1921
No. 11—Right of Association (Agricultural) convention 1921 concerning the rights of association and combination of agricultural workers.	11-5-1923
No. 14—Weekly rest (Industry) convention 1921 concerning the application of the weekly rest in industrial undertakings.	11-5-1923
No. 15—Minimum age (Trimmers and Stockers) convention 1921 fixing the minimum wage for the admission of young persons to employment as trimmers or stockers.	20-11-1922
No. 16—Medical examination of young persons (Sea) convention 1921 concerning the compulsory medical examination of children and young persons employed at sea.	20-11-1922
No. 18—Workmen's compensation (Occupational Disease) convention 1925 concerning workmen's compensation for occupational disease.	30-9-1927
No. 19—Equality of treatment (Accident compensation) convention 1925 concerning equality of treatment for natural and foreign workers as regards workmen's compensation for accident.	30-9-1927
No. 21—Inspection of Emigrants' convention 1926 concerning the simplification of the inspection of emigrants on boardship.	14-1-1928
No. 22—Seamen's Articles of Agreement convention 1926.	30-10-1932
No. 26—Maximum wage Fixing Machinery convention 1928.	10-1-1955
No. 27—Marking of weight (Packages Transports by vessels) convention 1929 concerning	7-9-1931

the marking of the weight on heavy package transported by vessels.

No. 29—Forced Labour Convention 1930	30-11-1954
No. 32—Protection against accidents (Dockers) convention revised 1932 concerning the protection against accidents of workers employed in loading and unloading ships.	10-2-1947
No. 41—Night work (Women) convention (Revised) 1934 concerning the employment of women during the night.	20-11-35 but this is no more in force for India as the latest convention No. 89 has been ratified by her.
No. 45—Underground work (Women) convention 1935 concerning the employment of women on underground work in Mines of all kinds.	25-3-1938
No. 80—Final Articles Revision Convention 1946.	17-11-1947
No. 81—Labour Inspection Convention 1947 concerning Labour Inspection in Industry and Commerce.	7-4-1949
No. 89—Night work (women) convention (Revised) 1948 concerning night work of women employed in Industry.	27-2-1950
No. 90—Night work of young persons (Industry) convention (Revised) 1948 concerning the night work of young persons employed in Industry.	27-2-1950

In addition to the conventions which she has ratified India has incorporated into her national legislation the essential feature of some of the other conventions.

Declaration of Philadelphia

After the outbreak of the war in 1939, the office of the I. L. O. was shifted from Geneva to Montreal in Canada. Though the League of Nations became more or less a dead body, the I. L. O. continued its work at Montreal. The aims and objectives of the I. L. O. were redefined by the 26th Session of the International Labour Conference in the Declaration of Philadelphia adopted in May 1944. This declaration reaffirms the fundamental principles upon which the organisation is based and in particular that—

- 1 (a) "Labour is not a commodity, (b) Freedom of expression and of association are essential to sustained progress, (c) Poverty anywhere constitutes a danger to prosperity everywhere and (d) The war against want requires to be carried on with unrelenting vigour within each nation and by continuous and concerted international efforts in which the representatives of workers and employers enjoying equal status with those of Governments, join with them in free discussion and democratic decision with a view to the promotion of the common welfare".

Participation by India in Meetings Convened by the International Labour Organisation.

The 37th session of International Labour Conference was held in Geneva in June 1954. India was represented by a tripartite delegation led by Shri K. P. Mukerjee, Minister Labour Government of West Bengal. The following were some of the subjects discussed by the conference :

- (a) Holidays with pay (Second discussion)
- (b) Vocational Rehabilitation of the Disabled (First Discussion)
- (c) Migrant workers (undeveloped countries)
- (d) Penal sanctions for breaches of contract of employment (First Discussion) and
- (e) Technical assistance.

INDUSTRIAL COMMITTEES

With a view to studying in detail the special problems of important industries, the International Labour Organisation set up during recent years Industrial Committees for the following nine industries: coalmining; inland transport; iron and steel; metal trades; textiles, buildings, civil engineering and public works; petroleum production and refinery, chemical and plantations. India is a member of all the Industrial Committees except the one relating to petroleum production and refinery, of these Committees, those on Inland Transport, Iron Steel and Metal Trade held their session in 1954.

Why more Conventions have not been ratified ?

It is generally complained that the number of Conventions ratified by India has been very small—she having ratified only 22 out of 103 conventions of I. L. O. so far. But we must know that the non-ratification has not been due to the unwillingness of the Government to recognise the essential good underlying the conventions. It has been largely due to the rule of the I. L. O. which requires that a convention must be ratified without a change or

modification. It must be accepted as a whole or not at all. India could have ratified many conventions with certain reservations only, but that was not permitted by the rules of the I. L. O. Hence, this rule requires to be modified so that certain Conventions may be adopted stage by stage and not as a whole.

I. L. O. and the United Nations

Article 57 of the charter of the United Nations lays down that "specialized agencies established by inter-governmental agreement and having wide international responsibilities as defined in their basic instruments in economic, social, cultural, educational, health, and related fields shall be brought into relationships with United Nations." A resolution was adopted in Paris conference of the I. L. O. in November 1945 for joining the United Nations and a similar desire was expressed by the economic and social council of the U. N. O. An agreement was ultimately signed by Mr. Trigve Lie, Secretary General of the U. N. O. and Mr. Edward Phelan, Director General of the International Labour Organisation which came into force from December 14, 1946 in accordance with which I. L. O. has become a recognised agency of the United Nations.

This agreement of the I. L. O. with the U. N. O. is most welcome. As a result I. L. O. now works in close co-operation with various other agencies of the United Nations, like the World Health Organisation in solving the problems of industrial health hygiene and UNESCO in studying cultural and educational questions. It is also co-operating with Food and Agricultural Organisation in examining the problems of agriculture, co-operation and other allied subjects and has proved to be very helpful in solving them.

In this way I. L. O. is helping the people in the attainment of the higher living standards adumbrated in the Charter of the United Nations and the Constitution of the International Labour Organisation.

I. L. O's Work in India

The public opinion in India is unanimous regarding the great benefits which the I. L. O. has conferred on our working classes. An Indian branch of the I. L. O. has been started at Delhi where it maintains a well-equipped library which has greatly facilitated the research work in this country. It possesses a great treasure house of information and has published enormous amount of useful literature on the current economic and social problems. The importance of such work can hardly be exaggerated in an industrially backward country like ours.

The I. L. O. has also done a good deal in influencing the labour movement in the country. The beginning of the movement coincided with the establishment of the I. L. O. It has created a sense of solidarity among the workers. It has awakened the consciousness among the workers of their rights and privileges, we agree with the late C. P. Andrews who had greatly appreciated I. L. O's work in India in a series of articles which he wrote in the *Hindu* of Madras in 1928. He then said, "If advantage is taken of the world position of immense importance which the I. L. O. has, there can be no doubt whatever that labour conditions in India will be improved in most rapid manner possible, I have said more than once in public and I would again repeat the fact that the ameliorations of labour conditions in India by direct legislature has gone forward more quickly in the last ten years since the I. L. O. was established than was possible in the fifty years before the establishment of the I. L. O." It is true that I. L. O. has accelerated the pace of labour legislation in India. But there are still many problems which the I. L. O. has yet to solve.

Mr. Jamna Das Mehta, the workers' delegate to the Philadelphia Conference in 1944, was absolutely correct when he said, "In a recent Publication by the Government of India it is admitted that only 5 per cent of the people of India have good protective water, even to drink, 95 per cent of the people of my country drink foul contaminated water; 200 out of every 1,000 inhabitants born die in the first year of existence as against 40 in Australia and New Zealand. The expectation of life in my country is 26 years as against 65 in New Zealand. These are the social conditions of my country despite 25 years of association of the Government of India with this organisation . . . we have no minimum wages, no social insurance either unemployment or sickness or any other. We have not known the limitations of hours of work, except in some factories and in the railway for the last few years." Since then the situation in India has slightly improved and the First Five Year Plan has definitely put the country on the road to progress. The labour conditions in India are much better today than what they were in 1944. But much work is still to be done. Let us hope that I. L. O. will play a more active part in helping the Government of India in the stupendous task of successfully implementing the Second Five Year Plan of our country.

CHAPTER XIX

LABOUR ADMINISTRATION

Under the Constitution of India, the responsibility for enacting and enforcing labour legislation is shared between the Central and State Governments. The laws which may be legislated fall under three lists, viz., The Union List, Concurrent List and the State List.

The Parliament has exclusive power to make laws with respect to any of the matters enumerated in the Union List. In regard to the Concurrent List, both the Parliament and the Legislature of any State have the power to make laws, while the State legislature of any State has exclusive power to make laws for such State.

Under the *Union List* fall such matters as :

- (1) Participation in international conferences, associations and other bodies and implementing of decisions made thereat.
- (2) Regulation of labour and safety in mines and oilfields.
- (3) Industrial disputes concerning Union employees.
- (4) Union agencies and institutions for : (a) professional, vocational or technical training, or (b) the promotion of special studies or research.
- (5) enquiries, surveys and statistics for the purpose of any of the matters in this list.

Under the *Concurrent List*, the following subjects may be legislated :

- (1) Economic and social planning.
- (2) Trade unions, industrial and labour disputes.
- (3) Social Security and Social Insurance; employment and unemployment.
- (4) Welfare of labour including conditions of work, provident fund, employers' liability, workmen's compensation, invalidity and old age pensions and maternity benefits.
- (5) Vocational and technical training of labour.
- (6) Factories.
- (7) Inquiries and statistics for purposes of any of the matters specified in the Concurrent List and the State List.

State List considers the relief of the disabled and unemployables.

Ministry of Labour

The Ministry of Labour of the Government of India, as now constituted, consists of the main Ministry (Secretariat). It is the central administration machinery for the formation of labour policy, for the enforcement of labour laws and for the promotion of labour welfare. It co-ordinates the activities of Governments in the labour sphere. It also forms the Secretariat for the Tripartite Labour Conference and Committees connected with the particular industries and is the channel for India's participation in the activities of the International Labour Organisation. The rest of the labour laws are administered by the State Governments through their own organisations.

The following are the Central Organisations:

1. *Directorate General of Resettlement and Employment*, (New Delhi). It maintains a number of training centres throughout the country giving facilities for technical and vocational training and apprenticeship for a considerable number of people.

2. *Office of the Director, Labour Bureau*, (Simla). The Bureau was set up in October, 1946 and has been responsible for : (i) collection, compilation and publication of labour statistics ; (ii) maintenance of cost of living index numbers ; (iii) keeping up-to-date the factual data relating to working conditions collected by the Labour Investigation Committee ; (iv) Conducting research into specific problems with a view to furnishing data required for the formulation of policy ; (v) editing the monthly Indian Labour Gazette, and (vi) Compiling Labour Code of various legislative enactments and the statutory rules made thereunder and a Labour Year Book.

It also publishes annual reports on the working of the Factories Act and the Indian Trade Unions Act ; and also issues from time to time special publications on matter of labour interest.

3. *Office of the Chief Labour Commissioner* (New Delhi). This organisation deals with the following matters : (i) Conciliation ; assistance in the formation and maintenance of voluntary machinery in industrial establishments ; prevention and settlement of trade disputes ; maintenance of information regarding wage rates and conditions of work and maintenance of continuous touch with the employers and work people.

(ii) Co-ordination of the activities of the various organizations set up for industrial relations by the Central Government, employers and workers.

(iii) Supervision of the work of Labour Officers.

(iv) Operation of labour laws to the extent to which their administration is a Central responsibility.

(v) Promotion of welfare schemes in Central and State undertakings. Under the Chief Labour Commissioner, there is a Welfare Adviser, two Welfare Officers, two Assistant Labour Commissioners, seven Regional Labour Commissioners and seventeen Conciliation Officers and fifty-two Labour Inspectors.

4. *Office of the Coal Mines Welfare Commissioner Dhanbad.* This office is responsible for the administration of the Coal Mines Labour Welfare Act, 1947. The Commissioner deals with the administration of Coal Mines Labour Welfare Fund Act and administration of the Mica Mines Labour Welfare Fund Act, 1946.

The Commissioner is assisted by a Coal Mines Labour Housing Board and a Coal Mines Labour Welfare Fund Advisory Committee.

5. *Office of the Chief Inspector of Mines (Dhanbad).* The activities of this department are

(i) Enforcement of Indian Mines Act, 1923 and the rules and regulations made thereunder.

(ii) Inspection of mines.

(iii) Investigation of accidents.

(iv) Inspection of electrical installations and machinery.

(v) Technical advice to mine owners.

(vi) Prosecutions in cases of violation of statutory provisions.

(vii) Collection of statistics under the Indian Mines Act

(viii) Enforcement of Mines Maternity Benefit Act, 1941.

The Chief Inspector of Mines is assisted by one Deputy Chief Inspector, 9 Inspectors, 19 Junior Inspectors, 7 Assistant Inspectors, a Statistician and the subordinate staff. He issues annually a report on the activities of the Mines Department. He also publishes a monthly Coal Bulletin which contains statistics regarding employment, absenteeism, output, hours of work, wages, production, despatches and stock.

6. *Office of the Chief Adviser of Factories, (New Delhi).* This office was set up in 1945. It deals with technical service on all matters relating to the health, welfare and safety of the workers. (ii) It advises on all matters relating to construc-

tion, design and lay-out of the factories ; working conditions such as lighting, ventilation, control of dust and fumes ; accident prevention and other safety precautions ; canteens, creches, washing arrangements and other welfare activities. (iii) It collects up-to-date information on progressive measures adopted in the advanced countries in respect of safety, health and welfare of industrial workers and disseminates such information in the form of pamphlets, leaflets, brochures, posters, sketches, charts, etc. (iv) It administers the Indian Dock Labourers Regulations, 1948. (v) It also deals with all matters relating to the administration of the Factories Act ; training of Factory Inspectors and Safety Officers ; Industrial Health ; Industrial Safety, Health and Welfare Museum and the housing of the industrial labour.

For his assistance the Chief Adviser, there are three Deputy Chief Advisers, six Inspectors.

7. *Office of the Controller of Emigrant Labour (Shillong)*. This office deals with : (i) administration of the Tea Districts Emigrant Labour Act, 1932, and the rules made thereunder ; (ii) recruitment and repatriation of labour from estates and inspections of the gardens and depots ; and (iii) compensation cases relating to persons belonging to Civil Labour Units, who worked on defence projects.

JUDICIAL BODIES

1. *Industrial Tribunal (Calcutta and Dhanbad)*. The Industrial Disputes Act, 1947, empowers the Central Government, in case of Railways, Central undertakings, major ports, banks, mines and insurance companies having branches in more than one State and oilfields and the State Government in other cases, to refer any matters connected with, or relevant to any existing or apprehended industrial dispute to an Industrial Tribunal for adjudication.

2. *Labour Appellate Tribunal*. A Labour Appellate Tribunal consisting of persons of the status of the High Court Judges, has been set up with headquarters at Calcutta and a bench each at Bombay, Lucknow and Madras to hear appeals against the decisions of Industrial Tribunals and Courts all over the country. The Industrial Disputes (Appellate Tribunal) Act, 1950, provides for the constitution of this Tribunal.

Office of the Director-General, Employees' State Insurance Corporation

This is a statutory institution set up to administer the Employees' State Insurance Act, 1948, which provides for sickness, maternity, disablement and dependant's benefits as well as medical benefit to workers employed in factories throughout the country.

The Executive Committee of the Corporation is the Standing Committee. The Director-General controls and co-ordinates the work of the other four Principal officers, *viz.*, the Medical Commissioner, the Insurance Commissioner, the Chief Accounts Commissioner and the Actuary

Central Provident Fund Commissioner

The Central Commissioner for Employees' Provident Fund under the Employees' Provident Funds Scheme, 1952, is the Chief Executive Officer of the Central Board of Trustees constituted under this Scheme and is subject to its general control. The main function of this Board is to provide for the institution of provident funds for employees or any other class of employees in factories.

Machinery for the Collection and Dissemination of Labour Information in States

All the States which are industrially important have set up organisation for the administration and enforcement of the various Labour Laws in force in their territories and for the collection, compilation and dissemination of statistical and other information relating to the labour. Labour Commissioners have been appointed in all States.

Statistics and other data required under the various labour laws are collected by the State Authorities, who also look after the administration and enforcement of these Acts. For example, statistics of employment, accidents under the Factories Act; and of wage bills and earnings under the Payment of Wages Act are collected by the Chief Inspectors of Factories, the Registrars of Trade Unions collect statistics relating to trade unions, their membership, funds, etc., and the Commissioners for Workmen's Compensation are in charge of the collection of statistics relating to accident, compensation paid, under the Workmen's Compensation Act. Statistics Authorities have been appointed in various States to collect detailed statistics on uniform lines under the Industrial Statistics Act, 1942.

Apart from the statistics and information collected on a statutory basis, *ad hoc* enquiries are undertaken from time to time, by some of the States for the collection of special data relating to particular problems of current interest. In addition, some data, such as those relating to the industrial disputes, retail prices, are collected by the State Authorities on a voluntary basis. The data thus collected are analysed and some of them are published in the form of annual reviews or in the journal published by the State Governments or in the Indian Labour Gazette, published by the Government of India's Labour Bureau.

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